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The Truth Speaks

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Trump says US can 'open Strait of Hormuz, take oil'

US President Donald Trump on Friday intensified tensions by asserting US capability over the Strait of Hormuz

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Friday intensified geopolitical tensions with a strong statement on the strategic Strait of Hormuz, claiming that the United States has the capability to take control of the key maritime route and benefit from its oil trade.

In a post on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump said, "With a little more time, we can easily open the Hormuz Strait, take the oil, and make a fortune." The remark has triggered fresh global concern amid already escalating tensions between the US and Iran.

Earlier in the day, Trump also warned of expanded strikes on civilian infrastructure in Iran following reported US military action that damaged a major highway bridge. In response, Iran reportedly struck a water facility in Kuwait and warned of further retaliation, deepening fears of a wider regional conflict.

The Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil transit chokepoints, has become a flashpoint in the ongoing confrontation, with disruptions raising alarm over global energy security and shipping stability.

WHY STRAIT OF HORMUZ MATTERS

- Around 20% of global oil shipments pass through this route
- Any blockade or conflict can sharply raise global fuel prices
- A key maritime link between Gulf oil producers and global markets
- Considered one of the most sensitive strategic waterways in the world

Iran claims second F-35 downed amid escalating tensions

Iran on Friday claimed that it had shot down a second U.S. F-35 stealth fighter jet over central Iran using an advanced air defence system operated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). According to Iranian state media, the aircraft was struck mid-air by a newly deployed IRGC Aerospace Force defence system, causing a massive explosion and crashing soon after impact.

Officials suggested the intensity of the blast made pilot survival unlikely, though there was no immediate confirmation from the United States regarding the incident.

Iranian defence sources said the jet was operating in central Iranian airspace when it was intercepted. This marks the second such claim in recent weeks, after Tehran earlier reported downing an F-35, though that aircraft was later said to have made an emergency landing with the pilot surviving.

Authorities in Tehran said the latest incident reflects upgrades in Iran's integrated air defence capabilities. The IRGC also claimed it has downed over 125 U.S.-Israeli drones in recent operations, signalling increased aerial interception activity amid rising regional tensions between Iran, the United States, and Israel.

Tanker with Iranian oil diverts mid-sea from India to China

NEW DELHI

A US-sanctioned Aframax tanker carrying Iranian crude oil has altered its course mid-voyage, switching its declared destination from India to China, signalling the fragility of global oil trade amid financial and geopolitical constraints. The vessel Ping Shun, earlier headed towards Vadinar in Gujarat, is now indicating Dongying in China, according to ship-tracking firm Kpler.

The development comes amid renewed interest from Indian refiners in sourcing Iranian oil after a temporary sanctions waiver by Washington. Had the shipment reached India, it would have marked the first import of Iranian crude since 2019. However, analysts suggest the sudden rerouting is likely linked to tightening payment terms, with sellers demanding upfront or near-term settlements instead of extended credit periods.

Experts note that such mid-voyage destination changes are not uncommon in Iranian oil trade, where opacity and evolving commercial conditions often dictate movement. While the tanker's Automatic Identification System (AIS) data indicates China as the new destination, it remains subject to change.

- Tanker Name: Ping Shun
- Cargo: 600,000 barrels of Iranian crude
- Original Destination: Vadinar, India
- New Destination: Dongying, China
- Peak Imports (2018): 518,000 barrels/day
- Oil at Sea (Iran): 95 million barrels
- Potential for India: 51 million barrels
- Sanctions Waiver Valid Till: April 19, 2026

Vadinar houses a major refinery operated by Nayara Energy, backed by Russia's Rosneft, making it a strategic hub for crude imports. India had historically relied on Iranian oil due to favourable pricing and refinery compatibility, with imports peaking at 11.5% of total intake in 2018 before ceasing in 2019 following US sanctions.

The current waiver window, valid until April 19, aimed to ease global oil prices, has opened limited opportunities. Yet, payment bottlenecks—exacerbated by Iran's exclusion from the SWIFT system—continue to hinder transactions, underscoring how financial mechanisms now rival logistics in shaping global oil flows.

Siddaramaiah defends kin candidates, says high command to decide on power-sharing

DAVANAGERE

Siddaramaiah on Friday defended the Congress party's decision to field family members of deceased MLAs in the upcoming Assembly bypolls, stating that it follows a long-standing political practice.

The bypolls were necessitated after the demise of sitting legislators from Davanagere South and Bagalkote constituencies. The Congress has fielded relatives of the late leaders, drawing criticism from the BJP over alleged dynastic politics. Responding to the charge, Siddaramaiah said such selections are common across parties when a sitting representative passes away.

> "It is a common practice that when a leader passes away, a family member represents the constituency. We have followed the same principle. As far as power-sharing is concerned, the high command will take a decision."
>
> —Siddaramaiah, Karnataka CM

Expressing confidence, he said the Congress is poised for a clean sweep in both constituencies in the April 9 by-elections. He also dismissed concerns about minority voter dissatisfaction, asserting that the community has consistently supported the party.

On governance, Siddaramaiah defended the State's guarantee schemes, describing them as "social investments" aimed at supporting weaker sections. He also maintained that Karnataka continues to adhere to fiscal discipline despite revenue challenges.

Addressing speculation about a leadership tussle and a possible rotational chief minister arrangement, Siddaramaiah said the matter rests with the party leadership.

Centre must share inflation burden, says DK Shivakumar

DAVANAGERE

D. K. Shivakumar on Friday defended the Karnataka government's borrowings, asserting that the loans were aimed at easing the financial strain on citizens amid rising prices of essential commodities. He also urged the Centre to share responsibility in addressing inflation.

Speaking to reporters, Shivakumar accused the Union government of failing to control price rise and instead shifting the burden onto states. He said the Karnataka government was implementing welfare guarantees to directly support people and counter inflationary pressures.

Taking a swipe at the Centre, he questioned why similar financial assistance schemes were not introduced at the national level. He also criticised the BJP, alleging that it was misleading the public with "hollow claims" rather than providing tangible relief.

Referring to welfare measures, Shivakumar said the state was committed to putting money directly into people's hands to help them cope with rising costs. He maintained that borrowing was necessary to sustain such programmes and protect vulnerable sections.

On political developments, Shivakumar emphasised that the Congress government's success was a collective effort alongside CM Siddaramaiah, party workers, and elected representatives.

Amit Shah reiterates BJP's pan-India UCC promise in Assam

GOALPARA

Amit Shah on Friday reaffirmed the BJP's commitment to implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across India, while assuring that tribal communities would remain outside its ambit, ahead of the Assembly elections in Assam.

Addressing a rally in Goalpara, Shah said the proposed UCC would bring uniformity in personal laws such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The promise forms a key part of the BJP's 31-point manifesto for the April 9 polls, positioning the issue as a major electoral plank.

Highlighting past milestones, Shah said the BJP had already fulfilled two major ideological goals—the construction of the Ram Temple and the abrogation of Article 370—and asserted that a nationwide UCC remains a priority.

Ashoka slams CM over rice scheme, fiscal issues

DAVANAGERE

Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka on Friday launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, accusing him of misusing the Centre's rice supply under the Annabhagya scheme and misleading the public with false claims.

Addressing a press conference, Ashoka alleged that the state government was rebranding rice provided by the Central Government as its own scheme. "The government is putting its own label on Centre-supplied rice and claiming credit. This deception will not work on people," he said.

Taking a swipe at the Chief Minister, Ashoka remarked, "People should call him 'Annaramaiah' for providing food, but instead he has become 'Kannaramaiah'," accusing him of "stealing" credit for welfare initiatives.

He further criticised the Congress government over alleged delays in implementing guarantee schemes.

QUICK READ

Discrepancies spark concerns in Vijay's affidavits

CHENNAI: Vijay has come under scrutiny after discrepancies surfaced in election affidavits filed for Perambur and Tiruchirappalli East constituencies ahead of the Assembly polls. The Perambur affidavit states that Vijay has no pending criminal cases, while a later filing in Tiruchirappalli East declares two FIRs, including one linked to a campaign-related incident. Differences were also noted in declared election bank accounts, with the Trichy document listing an additional account. Legal experts say such inconsistencies could invite action under the Representation of the People Act, which penalises false declarations.

Yettinahole project clears forest nod hurdle

SHIVAMOGGA: A major hurdle for the Yettinahole Drinking Water Project has been cleared after the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change granted in-principle approval to divert 111.02 hectares of forest land in Hassan and Tumakuru districts. The long-pending clearance enables construction of a gravity canal, which had been delayed due to regulatory approvals. Officials said the revised land requirement, reduced from 173.31 hectares, has increased project costs but eased environmental concerns. The approval comes with conditions, including compensatory afforestation, payment of net present value, and settlement of forest rights. Authorities must fulfil these before commencing work. Of the 252-km canal, 238 km is already complete. The project aims to provide drinking water to nearly 75 lakh people across drought-prone districts in Karnataka.

MARITIME POWER BOOST

Rajnath Singh commissions stealth frigate INS Taragiri

VISAKHAPATNAM

Rajnath Singh on Friday commissioned the advanced stealth frigate INS Taragiri into the Indian Navy, marking a major boost to India's maritime strength and indigenous defence capabilities.

Built under Project 17A, INS Taragiri is the fourth stealth frigate in its class and has been constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited. The commissioning ceremony was attended by senior naval leadership, including Navy Chief Dinesh Kumar Tripathi and Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan.

Weighing around 6,670 tonnes, the warship represents a significant advancement in naval design, featuring reduced radar visibility, advanced combat systems, and multi-role operational capabilities. The induction comes at a time when the strategic importance of India's eastern seaboard and the Indo-Pacific region continues to grow.

INS Taragiri is equipped with a sophisticated array of weapons, including supersonic surface-to-surface missiles, medium-range surface-to-air missiles, and advanced anti-submarine warfare systems. Its Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion ensures high speed and endurance, enabling it to undertake a wide spectrum of missions.

With over 75% indigenous content and contributions from more than 200 MSMEs, the warship underscores India's push for self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

Officials said the frigate will enhance the Navy's operational readiness while also supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, reinforcing India's role as a key maritime power in the region.

KANNADA LANGUAGE IN CRISIS

Dr. Hampa Nagarajaiah warns of cultural decline

MYSURU

Eminent scholar Dr. Hampa Nagarajaiah expressed deep concern over the declining state of Kannada, warning that the language is facing an existential crisis due to neglect by its own speakers.

Speaking at a programme held at Sahitya Bhavana in Vijayanagar on Friday, organized by the Federation of Karnataka Industrial and Commercial Kannada Associations, he remarked that Kannada, once considered immortal, is now "melting away" because of apathy among Kannadigas themselves.

The event marked the release of works titled Nichcham Hosathu and Sarvakalikku Pampa Krutigalu, along with a literary interaction programme.

"Kannada today needs to be admitted to the emergency ward," Dr. Nagarajaiah said metaphorically and recalled that in earlier generations, families ensured that children could read and write Kannada, and newspapers were commonly subscribed to at home. However, in the present generation, while children may speak Kannada, many lack the ability to read and write it due to the growing dominance of English.

Dr Nagarajaiah warned that the threat to Kannada is not external but internal. Parents themselves are distancing their children from Kannada schools and environments. As a result, Kannada is becoming a stranger in its own home," he said, adding that this trend could push the language toward decline.

Highlighting the rich literary heritage of Kannada, he praised the 10th-century poet Pampa for elevating the language from a spoken medium to a classical literary and court language. Born into a milieu influenced by Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Telugu traditions, Pampa and his brother Jinavallabha made immense contributions to Kannada literature.

Dr. Nagarajaiah noted that Pampa condensed the vast Sanskrit Mahabharata, originally comprising nearly one lakh shlokas, into around 1,600 verses in Kannada—an achievement that reflects his profound mastery of the source text. Similarly, he adapted Jinasena's Adipurana of 10,000 shlokas into 1,600 Kannada verses, a feat he described as extraordinary.

Drawing comparisons, he said that while the Greek poet Homer took 25 years to compose Iliad and Odyssey, Pampa is believed to have composed two great epics within a span of six and three months respectively, as mentioned by the poet himself.

Director of Kuvempu Institute of Kannada Studies, Prof. N.K. Lolakshi, also spoke at the event, emphasizing the philosophical depth of Jainism, particularly its advocacy of non-violence. "Not only physical violence, even emotional harm must be avoided," she said, describing this as a modern extension of Jain philosophy.

She stressed the urgent need to propagate Pampa's message globally and suggested leveraging artificial intelligence to translate his works into English for wider reach.

In a strong remark, she questioned global leadership, stating that reckless exploitation of natural resources endangers future generations. "If leaders destroy natural wealth, who will safeguard the future? Rising oil prices affect us all. Institutions like the United Nations must question who has the right to deplete nature," she said.

The programme was attended by several dignitaries including former Vice-Chancellor Dr. Padmashekar, Federation President M. Thimmaiah, Women's Secretary Shantala Suresh, Karnataka Lekhakiyara Sangha President Usha Narasimhan, and District Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Maddikere Gopal, among others.

Experts Urge Children to Nurture Creativity Early

MYSURU

Encouraging children to develop an interest in art from a young age, Lingappa Pujar, Art Subject Supervisor at the Joint Director's Office, advised students to actively engage in drawing and painting to nurture their hidden talents.

The inauguration was done by sketching a drawing himself. and he emphasized that such camps provide a valuable platform for budding artists to discover and express their latent abilities.

Speaking after inaugurating the 17th annual art camp organized by JSS Mahavidyapeetha at the Balajagat premises on Ramanuja Road here on Friday, he drew a simple analogy and said butter, once melted, cannot return to its original form, but ghee can be used to prepare many items. Similarly, children must cultivate interest in art from an early age and develop their skills over time.

Art camp inspires young minds in Mysuru

Consistent practice and early exposure are key to mastering any art form.

Presiding over the program, M. Shivamaddappa, Assistant Director of the School Education Division at JSS Mahavidyapeetha, noted that while many people have an inherent interest in drawing, it is the role of teachers in such camps to provide structure and refine that raw talent. Art is a reflection of what is in the mind, but it requires skill and guidance to bring it to life effectively.

Highlighting the global recognition of art, he pointed out that masterpieces such as the Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci and works by Raja Ravi Varma have fetched enormous value, running into crores of rupees. He added that art also serves as an important medium to document civilization and culture for future generations.

Senior artist S.M. Jambukeshwara, the camp coordinator, delivered the introductory remarks and explained that the institution has been organizing art camps for over two decades, though the program was halted for three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making this the 17th edition.

The 23-day camp is being conducted in the scenic surroundings of Balajagat, where students sit under the shade of large trees with teachers guiding them. A field visit to Suttur is also planned as part of the camp.

Senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar attended as the chief guest. The event also saw participation from teachers and students, with senior camper Likhita sharing her experiences. The event concluded with a vote of thanks, marking a vibrant beginning to the creative camp.

Free Vedic Sanskrit cultural camp for Brahmin boys in the city

MYSURU

A free "Vasantha Veda Sanskrit Samskara Camp" has been organized for Brahmin boys (Vatus) at the Sri Abhinava Shankara Alaya Shankara Mutt located in Mysuru Agrahara. The camp is open to boys aged between 7 and 16 years who have undergone the Upanayana (sacred thread ceremony). The camp will be held from April 23 to May 2, 2026, with sessions conducted daily from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

During the camp, participants will be trained in various traditional practices and disciplines, including Vedic sutras, devotional songs (geeta paatha), bhajans, Sandhyavandana rituals, Agni-related practices, the method of applying sacred ash (Bhasma Dharana), and traditional dining etiquette (Bhojana Vidhi). In addition, useful Vedic hymns and mantras will be taught to the students as part of their cultural and spiritual development. The official poster for the camp was released by Ramachandra, Dharmadhikari of the Mutt, and Manager Sheshadri Bhat.

The last date for registration is April 20, 2026. For further details and registration, interested participants can contact the organizers at 0821-2448213 or 9448185448, as informed by the Mutt volunteers.

Vedike holds protest against MCC for competing with Trump-Style Taxes

MYSURU

Members of Mysore Kannada Vedike staged a protest in front of Mysuru City Corporation against the imposition of new kinds of taxes on the innocent citizens.

In recent days, the general public has been severely burdened by rising prices, fuel hikes, increased taxes, and higher registration charges. At such a time, the Mysuru City Corporation has abruptly imposed a hike in rates in the absence of elected council members, which is highly condemnable. This decision has only added fuel to the fire for already distressed citizens.

People are already frustrated with the mismanagement of local bodies and municipal administration. Basic civic issues such as drainage problems have worsened, corruption is rampant in zonal offices, delays in file disposal continue, and administrative irresponsibility is evident. Furthermore, with the state treasury strained due to guarantee schemes, the development of basic infrastructure within the corporation limits has been severely affected.

Despite all these shortcomings, the decision to increase taxes is unjustifiable and amounts to a betrayal of the middle class and common citizens. It is an economic blow to their livelihoods. The state government's policies and regulations, which directly target the common man, are unscientific and have become unbearable.

Before the situation forces people to take to the streets, such irrational tax policies must be withdrawn immediately. The increase in taxes imposed on the middle class, poor citizens, urban residents, and vehicle owners is particularly harmful. For instance, imposing taxes on auto drivers and goods vehicle owners for parking their vehicles outside is nothing short of a "Tughlaq-style" decision.

The protest is led by Forum President S. Balakrishna. Leaders including Nala Beedi Ravi, Bogadi Siddegowda, Palace Babu, Chamaraju Mandakalli, Harish, Chinnappa Shivugowda, Madappa Sunil, Gopi Guide Swami, Beeda Babu, Govindaraju, Ramesh, Siddappa, LIC Honkere Swami, Nagaraju, and Raitha Parva President Arun Kumar were present.

St. Philomena's College hosts awareness program on drug abuse

MYSURU

In a strong bid to promote a healthy, addiction-free lifestyle among the youth, St. Philomena's College (Autonomous), Mysore, currently celebrating its Oak Jubilee Year organized an "Awareness Program on Drug Abuse" in the city.

Initiated as an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) activity, the session championed the powerful message: "Say NO to Drugs, Say YES to Life."

The highlight was an insightful address by the distinguished Resource Person, Siddesh M. L., Sub-Inspector of Police, N. R. Traffic Police Station, Mysuru City. Drawing on his experience in law enforcement and traffic management, he educated the students on the severe personal, legal, and societal consequences of substance abuse, urging them to make responsible choices.

The event was presided over by Rev. Dr. Lourdu Prasad Joseph, Rector of St. Philomena's College. The gathering was also graced by the presence of the college's esteemed leadership team, including Principal - Dr. Ravi J.D. Saldanha, Vice Principal (Administration) - Mr. Ronald Prakash Cutinha, IQAC Coordinator - Mr. A. Thomas Gunaseelan and IQAC Co-Coordinator - Dr. Deepa V. Ms. Arshiya Khanum welcomed the gathering and the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Sandesh D' Souza.

BHAJANS FOSTER SPIRITUAL AWARENESS: MADDIKERE GOPAL

MYSURU

District Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Maddikere Gopal opined that bhajans (devotional songs) help in developing spiritual awareness.

He was speaking after inaugurating a state-level bhajan competition organized on Saturday at the District Kannada Sahitya Bhavana in Vijayanagar, as part of the fourth anniversary celebrations of Maharathna Trust and International Women's Day. Presiding over the inaugural function, he said that listening to bhajans creates a divine experience, as though one is transported to a heavenly realm. "Bhajans continue to be sung everywhere even today. In rural areas especially, they are sung throughout the night," he added.

Mysuru M. Mahalingu, President of Maharathna Trust, said that bhajans and music bring mental satisfaction and contribute to both mental and physical well-being. "They enhance longevity and instill a sense of divinity. Through music, we can safeguard the well-being of society," he said.

He further informed that the Trust is planning to organize workshops on music and stage songs in the coming days. These workshops will help participants learn nuances such as voice modulation and other finer aspects of music.

Singer Divya Sachchidananda, who was one of the judges, emphasized the importance of rhythm (taala) and pitch (shruti) in music. Another judge, singer Hamsini S. Kumar, noted that while competitions are often conducted for light music and film songs, organizing a bhajan competition is a welcome and meaningful initiative.

Senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar inaugurated the competition. Maharathna Trust Secretary Roopa was present, while M.K. Pooja compered the programme.

Students of Maharathna Music School rendered the invocation. Several teams from different places participated in the bhajan competition.

Women should be achievers, not just speakers: Revathi Krishnappa

MYSURU

Women should not remain as those who merely talk, but should become achievers who make a difference in society. They must become a source of light in the lives of the distressed and develop compassion to respond to the struggles of women in need, said Revathi Krishnappa, President of Bhairavi Gowdathiyara Balaga.

She was speaking at the International Women's Day celebration organized by the Bhairavi Gowdathiyara Balaga at the District Kannada Sahitya Parishat premises in Vijayanagar, Mysuru.

On the occasion, two achievers from different fields were honored by the organization. Dr. Meena Manjunath, a dentist at Mysuru District Hospital, and Vijaya Ramesh, who participates in international-level sports, were felicitated for their accomplishments.

As part of the celebrations, around 45 women participated in the "Bhairavi Woman of the Year 2026" ramp walk. Roopa Devendra was crowned as the winner, while Anita Madegowda secured the runner-up position. Pooja and Chaithra were also among the winners.

The panel of judges included Asha Babu, Veena Jayanth, and Bindu.

The event was presided over by Revathi Krishnappa, who also addressed the gathering after felicitating the achievers.

Honorary President Radha Lankegowda, along with directors Dr. Hemanandish, Komala Venkatesh, and Sushila Basavaraj, were present at the program.

The event was organized by Vasanthakumari, Prameela, Lalitha Ranganath, Mani, Prabha Nagaraj, Hema Ravi, Roopa Mahesh, Vijaya Ramesh, Savithri Somashekar, Lakshmi, along with hundreds of members of the Bhairavi Gowdathiyara Balaga.

VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE CESS ROLLED BACK IN MYSURU

Public outcry forces MCC to withdraw controversial levy

MYSURU

In a significant relief to vehicle owners, the Mysuru City Corporation has officially withdrawn its decision to impose a Vehicle Infrastructure Cess alongside property tax. The move comes in response to strong public backlash and widespread criticism over the proposed levy.

Earlier, during a general council meeting, the corporation had approved the introduction of this cess under the provisions of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976. The objective was to generate additional revenue for improving urban road infrastructure and traffic management systems in the city. As per the proposal, an annual cess was to be collected along with property tax for the financial year 2026–27. The rates were structured as follows: ₹100 for two-wheelers, ₹200 for three-wheelers, and ₹500 for four-wheelers. A public notification regarding the implementation had also been issued on March 23, triggering immediate reactions from citizens.

The proposal quickly became a point of contention among residents, taxpayers, and civic activists. Many argued that linking vehicle-related charges with property tax was illogical and unscientific. Citizens questioned the rationale behind collecting a vehicle-based fee through a property ownership framework, stating that it blurred taxation boundaries and lacked transparency.

Additionally, concerns were raised about the potential for double taxation, as vehicle owners already pay road taxes at the time of registration. Critics felt the new cess would unfairly burden the middle class without clear accountability on how the funds would be utilized. Social media campaigns, public discussions, and representations to civic authorities intensified the pressure on the administration. Several resident associations and stakeholders demanded a rollback, calling the move "poorly conceived."

MCC Commissioner Shaikh Tanveer Asif

Background of the Issue

Urban local bodies across India have been exploring alternative revenue streams due to increasing financial pressures and rising infrastructure demands. Mysuru, known for its expanding urban footprint and growing vehicle population, has been grappling with traffic congestion and road maintenance challenges.

The proposed cess was seen as an attempt to bridge funding gaps for infrastructure projects. However, the lack of stakeholder consultation and clarity in implementation led to mistrust among the public.

Taking note of the widespread objections, civic authorities conducted a detailed review of the pros and cons of the proposal. Prioritizing public sentiment and administrative feasibility, the Mysuru City Corporation has now decided to shelve the plan for the time being.

In an official statement, the Commissioner confirmed that the cess collection process has been halted in the interest of the public. The administration has assured that any future measures will be taken only after thorough consultation and careful consideration.

While the rollback has been welcomed, the episode highlights the importance of transparency, public engagement, and policy clarity in urban governance. For now, Mysuru residents can breathe a sigh of relief as the controversial cess remains off the table.

Benefits of R&D must reach the common people: Union Minister Singh

MYSURU

Union Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Jitendra Singh, emphasized that research and development should not remain confined within laboratories but must effectively reach the people.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the valedictory ceremony of the Amrit Mahotsav celebrations of the CSIR–Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), held on Friday at the IFTTC auditorium in the city.

The minister noted that institutions like CFTRI must engage directly with farmers, collaborate with entrepreneurs, and continuously adopt new ideas. This would enable science, technology, and entrepreneurship to be meaningfully applied for societal development.

Highlighting the importance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Singh said they would play a crucial role in the future economy. Amid global political and economic uncertainties, these enterprises can strengthen the grassroots economy. The that collaboration between sectors such as space, sports, and food could open up new opportunities in developing space food and nutritionally rich sports food.

He observed that while starting startups is relatively easy, sustaining them is more challenging. There is a need for proper evaluation, market skills, and continuous support. Collaboration between CSIR institutions and management institutes like IIMs could help startups gain guidance and market access.

Referring to changing lifestyles, Singh said the demand for ready-to-eat and take-home food is rising. Food research institutions can tap into this by developing nutritious, convenient food packages, especially for working women and youth who lack time to cook. Time calls for promoting iron-rich date-based products through women and child welfare schemes, particularly for pregnant women, noting that such products have strong market potential.

NOT USEFUL

The Union minister observed that printing books about institutional achievements and technologies is no longer sufficient. In the digital age, information should be disseminated through digital formats, QR codes, and short videos for greater impact. Nutritional information and preparation methods should be communicated in a simple manner. There is a need for dedicated social media teams comprising content creators and scientists to make information more accessible and effective.

The Minister also emphasized that businesses must be designed with youth in mind, as over 60 per cent of India's population is below 35 years of age. Understanding their aspirations is key before introducing any technology into the market.

He appreciated food technology institutions for modernizing traditional and conventional food practices to suit 21st-century tastes.

CSIR Director General Dr. N. Kalaiselvi suggested that CFTRI should prioritize research in sports nutrition and space food.

BIRAC Managing Director Dr. Jitendra Kumar highlighted India's rich food heritage, noting that many traditional foods are scientifically proven to be beneficial for health and help maintain healthy microbiomes. He said combining this heritage with scientific thinking and entrepreneurship could bring about a major transformation in the sector.

Member of Parliament Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar conveyed his message via video.

CFTRI Director Dr. Giridhar Parvatam presided over the event. Scientist Chinni Vasudevappa was also present on the dais.

Tiger Death Triggers Crackdown

Two Poachers held near Kabini Backwaters

MYSURU

Close on the heels of the recent death of a tiger in a snare trap, forest officials have arrested two alleged poachers near the Kabini backwaters in the Bandipur Tiger Reserve area of H.D. Kote taluk.

The action comes days after a three-year-old male tiger died on March 27 after getting trapped in an illegal snare set for wild boars at Agasanahundi village on the fringes of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. Treating the incident with utmost seriousness, the Mysore Forest Department constituted a special patrol team to intensify surveillance along forest borders of both Nagarhole and Bandipur reserves.

On April 2, while patrolling near Bhimanakolli Sri Mahadeshwara Temple in the forest area, the special team noticed a suspicious car and individuals loitering near the Kabini backwaters. The team intercepted the vehicle and detained the occupants for questioning.

The accused have been identified as Suresh Kumar K.H. alias Girish (43), a resident of Kriti village in Somwarpet taluk of Kodagu district, and Madhusudan M.B. alias Prajwal Gowda (29). A search of their Maruti Suzuki Alto car (KA-04-MJ-4989) revealed a cache of hunting equipment, including a double-barrel gun, a single-barrel gun, gunpowder, lead pellets, six wire snares, batteries, a gas cylinder, burner, tarpaulin, utensils and other materials.

Forest officials also found carcasses of 14 wild boars, indicating that the accused had been engaged in large-scale illegal hunting since April 1. Authorities suspect that deer and other wildlife were also being targeted.

The duo has been arrested and booked under provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act. All weapons, equipment and the vehicle used in the crime have been seized. The accused have been remanded to judicial custody.

The operation was carried out under the leadership of Assistant Conservator of Forests Rudresh G., along with Zonal Forest Officer Surendra K., Deputy Zonal Forest Officer Muthuraju V., and patrol staff including Tirupati Poojara, Kumar and Devaraj Bandivadder.

Forest officials have appealed to the public to assist in wildlife protection efforts by reporting suspicious activities. Citizens can contact the Forest Helpline 1926 to alert authorities about poaching or illegal hunting in forest areas.

The swift action by the department is being seen as a strong message against wildlife crimes in the region.

REVIVING TRADITIONAL GAMES

Noted Kannada actor, Vinay Raj Kumar participated in the inauguration of 11th biennial expo and sale of traditional boardgames organized by Ramsons as part of 'Kreedaa Kaushalya' at Ramsons Bombe Mane, in Mysuru on Friday. Ganesh V Shivaswamy, Shubha Sanjay Urs, H.S.Dharmendra and others are also seen.

Syndicate Row Erupts Over Palace Pact

UoM Registrar rebukes member for 'Premature Allegations'

MYSURU

A fresh controversy has surfaced within the University of Mysore Syndicate over the proposed agreement concerning the historic Jayalakshmi Vilas Palace building, with the Registrar issuing a strong rebuttal to Syndicate member Dr. T.R. Chandrashekhar for what she termed as "pre-emptive and unverified allegations."

In an official communication addressed to Dr. Chandrashekhar, the Registrar clarified the sequence of events and discussions held during the Syndicate meeting on March 27, 2026. According to the statement, Dr. Chandrashekhar had briefly exited the meeting to attend a telephone call and, upon returning, was allegedly unaware of the earlier deliberations regarding the proposed agreement.

The Registrar emphasized that the Syndicate had not taken any final decision on the matter. The previous meetings only examined the pros and cons of the proposed agreement. No resolution has been passed, nor has any formal approval been granted, the communication stated.

Addressing concerns raised in Dr. Chandrashekhar's earlier letter dated April 1, 2026, the registrar also clarified that no commitment had been made to sign the agreement. The registrar's office had merely indicated that the proposal would be reviewed in accordance with the University Act, relevant statutes, and government policies before any decision is taken.

The communication strongly objected to the tone and content of the allegations, stating that they were made without thorough verification of facts and without complete understanding of the Syndicate proceedings. The claims are premature and unnecessary, especially when the matter is still under consideration and no official proceedings have been finalized.

Calling for restraint and responsibility, the Registrar urged Dr. Chandrashekhar to immediately withdraw the letter. She further advised that any future concerns or allegations on sensitive institutional matters should be made only after obtaining accurate information from concerned authorities and conducting a proper review.

The issue has drawn attention within academic and administrative circles, as the Jayalakshmi Vilas Palace—an iconic heritage structure—remains a significant asset of the University. With no final decision yet taken, the Syndicate is expected to deliberate further before arriving at a consensus on the proposed agreement.

The development underscores growing tensions within the Syndicate, highlighting the need for clarity, coordination, and due process in decision-making at one of the state's premier universities.

Dr. Mulluru Nanjundaswamy Elected President of Rotary Jayaprakash Nagar

MYSURU

Dr. Mulluru Nanjundaswamy has been elected as the new President of the Rotary Mysuru Jayaprakash Nagar Charitable Trust. He had earlier played a key role in establishing the charitable trust during his tenure as President of the Rotary Club of J.P. Nagar for the year 2022–23. His leadership has been marked by a strong commitment to community service and social welfare initiatives.

Currently, he is actively involved in Rotary International District 3181, serving as the Zone Lieutenant for Zone-7, where he continues to contribute significantly to various service-oriented projects. The newly constituted team of the trust includes M. Nataraju as Vice-President, M. Prakash as Secretary, Pushparaj Jain as Joint Secretary, and Dr. C. Venkatesh as Treasurer. The trust is expected to further expand its charitable activities under the leadership of Dr. Nanjundaswamy, focusing on community development and humanitarian services in the region.

QUICK READ

Parents protest rash driving by school bus in Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Parents and residents in Sampigehalli, North Bengaluru, staged a protest against alleged rash driving by a Vibgyor School bus, demanding an apology from the driver. The protestors blocked the vehicle in Chokkanahalli after a child narrowly escaped being hit near his home. Following a complaint, Sampigehalli police issued a notice to the driver, identified as M. Harsha, who later apologised. Residents said repeated reckless driving by school buses had raised safety concerns in the area. Police officials stated that more drivers accused of negligent driving would be summoned, as authorities move to address growing complaints from residents.

Special summer train between Bengaluru, Chennai announced

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
To manage increased passenger traffic during summer, South Western Railway has announced a one-trip special train service between Bengaluru Cantonment and Dr. MGR Chennai Central. Train No. 06545 will depart from Bengaluru Cantonment at 8:05 AM on April 9 and reach Chennai at 3 PM. The return service, Train No. 06546, will leave Chennai at 4:45 PM and arrive in Bengaluru at 11 PM the same day. The train will have 21 coaches and halt at key stations including Krishnarajapuram, Bangarpet, Kuppam, Jolarpet, Katpadi, Sholingur, Arakkonam, and Thiruvallur. However, it will skip Perambur on the return journey.

Auto LPG supply increased in Karnataka: Indian Oil

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Indian Oil Corporation has increased auto LPG supply across Karnataka to meet rising demand, especially as several private outlets remain shut or partially functional. Officials said there are 55 Indian Oil auto LPG distribution centres in the state, while around 300 private outlets have reported disruptions. This has led to a surge in demand at government-run stations. Daily sales at Indian Oil outlets have risen to 59.53 metric tonnes from a three-month average of 43.4 metric tonnes. The company assured uninterrupted supply and measures to stabilise distribution.

Karnataka to nurture 20 clean energy startups annually under Australia pact

State shifts focus to renewable energy innovation through global partnerships and incubation

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

After nurturing thousands of start-ups across sectors, Karnataka is now pivoting towards renewable energy technologies with a global collaboration aimed at boosting innovation and entrepreneurship.The State Energy Department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of New South Wales (UNSW), NSRCEL, and Foundation for Science Innovation and Development (FSID) to promote clean energy start-ups. The initiative, facilitated by the Australian India Business Council, aims to nurture around 20 start-ups annually across solar, wind, energy storage, and green fuels.

The MoU was signed by K.P. Rudrappaiah of Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Corporation Limited (KREDL) and Prof. Lisa Zamberlan of UNSW. As part of the three-year partnership, an incubation and technology innovation centre will be established in Bengaluru.

Officials said KREDL will provide infrastructure and funding support, while UNSW will offer technical mentorship, global research access, and international exposure through its Founders Programme. High-potential start-ups will also gain access to global markets and advanced incubation

Energy Minister K. J. George said the initiative will strengthen Karnataka's clean energy ecosystem and attract investments. Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta noted that the partnership aims to create a global innovation ecosystem benefiting businesses, government, and citizens.Prof. Zamberlan said the collaboration reflects a shared commitment to advancing clean energy innovation and sustainable development.

The move is expected to position Karnataka as a leading hub for renewable energy start-ups, aligning with global climate goals and India's energy transition roadmap.

- New vehicles (2025-26): Two-wheelers: 5.2 lakh; Cars: 1.5 lakh
- Daily additions: ~2,100
- Peak month (Oct): 86,014 vehicles
- Total vehicles: 1.2 crore
- Two-wheelers: 86 lakh
- Cars: 24.8 lakh
- Cabs/taxis: 2.9 lakh
- Autos: 3.8 lakh

Bengaluru adds over 2,100 vehicles daily; total crosses 1.2 crore

Rising reliance on private vehicles highlights gaps in public transport infrastructure

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru's vehicle population has crossed a staggering 1.2 crore as of March 31, 2026, underscoring mounting pressure on the city's already strained transport infrastructure. With nearly 7.9 lakh new vehicles added in 2025–26 alone—averaging over 2,100 registrations daily—the surge reflects growing dependence on private transport amid inadequate public mobility options.

The rapid increase has intensified traffic congestion across the city, where road expansion has failed to keep pace with vehicle growth. The Greater Bengaluru Authority manages a road network of 14,063 km, translating to nearly 900 vehicles per kilometre.

Two-wheelers dominate the surge, accounting for 5.2 lakh new registrations this year, followed by 1.5 lakh cars. Experts point to affordability and convenience as key drivers behind the spike, particularly in areas underserved by reliable public transport.

On the revenue front, the HSR Layout RTO (KA-01) emerged as the top-performing office in Karnataka, generating ₹1,273 crore in 2025–26. It has held the top position for three consecutive years. Other major contributors include Kasturinagar RTO with ₹1,098 crore and Jayanagar RTO with ₹969 crore. Nationally, HSR Layout ranks third after Pune and Pimpri RTOs.

Officials said revenue streams include vehicle registration taxes, commercial levies, and enforcement collections.Urban planners warn that unless public transport systems are significantly strengthened, Bengaluru's traffic challenges could worsen, impacting commute times, pollution levels, and overall quality of life.

GBA proposes to allow 15% building plan deviation in Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a significant relief to thousands of property owners, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has proposed increasing the permissible deviation from sanctioned building plans from 5% to 15%. The move is expected to help many buildings secure occupancy certificates, which have remained pending due to minor violations.

The proposal is part of a draft notification seeking amendments to the 2003 building bye-laws. Public objections and suggestions have been invited until April 30, after which the revised rules will be finalised.

Under current norms, any deviation beyond 5% is considered unauthorised, leaving several property owners without occupancy certificates and limiting access to essential civic services like water and electricity. Officials said the revised policy aims to address practical challenges in a rapidly growing city.

However, deviations beyond 15% will still invite strict enforcement, including possible demolition. Authorities clarified that only buildings meeting key safety standards—such as structural stability, ventilation, and access—will qualify for regularisation.

GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao said the earlier limit had become impractical due to rising land costs and dense urban development. Constraints like small plot sizes often result in unavoidable variations in setbacks, floor area ratio (FAR), and building coverage.The new framework also introduces a structured system for regularising deviations through payment of compounding fees, calculated based on the land's guidance value. It further defines limits across parameters such as setbacks, FAR, height, and plot coverage to ensure uniform enforcement.

The proposed changes are expected to ease compliance while maintaining safety standards in Bengaluru's expanding urban landscape.

Bengaluru power outages persist despite regular maintenance

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Despite routine maintenance works by power utilities, Bengaluru continues to face frequent power outages and voltage fluctuations, with residents reporting repeated disruptions across several localities. Scheduled shutdowns, often lasting from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., are regularly announced by Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) and Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM), but citizens question their effectiveness. While officials maintain that most interruptions are not actual power cuts but temporary faults that are quickly rectified, residents argue that even minor rain or load changes trigger multiple outages.

Conman in SUV dupes elderly woman, flees with gold bangles

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

An 80-year-old woman was duped by a conman posing as an acquaintance, who drove away with her gold bangles after gaining her trust through a fabricated story.

According to a complaint filed by Kanaka Sampath, a resident of Basavanagudi, the incident occurred around 11.45 am on March 28 when she was alone at home. The accused arrived in a white Toyota Fortuner and struck up a friendly conversation, pretending to be a known person or distant relative.

To win her confidence, he claimed his wedding was scheduled next month and invited her, even promising to gift her a sari. During the conversation, he noticed her gold bangles, praised their design and said he wanted similar ones made for his fiancée.

He convinced her to accompany him to a jewellery shop, offering to drive her as she had difficulty walking due to leg pain. Trusting him, she got into the vehicle. After driving around the Mani Sports area and claiming no shops were nearby, he brought her back home.

The accused then told her he would call a jeweller to her residence and requested the bangles to show the design. While distracting her with images of gold bars on his phone, he took the bangles weighing about 50 grams.

Within moments, he asked her to step out of the vehicle and sped away. The woman later realised the bangles were missing and approached the police.

A case has been registered under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections 303 (theft) and 318 (cheating). Police said CCTV footage has captured the vehicle's registration number, and efforts are on to trace the accused.

Bengaluru North Corporation leads in social welfare spending: Report

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) has emerged as the top spender on social welfare programmes among the city's five civic bodies, allocating the highest share of its budget towards health, education and welfare initiatives, according to an analysis by non-profit Janaagraha.

The report shows that BNCC has earmarked 11% of its budget for programme expenses, significantly higher than East and South corporations, which have each allocated 7%. Central and West corporations lag behind with just 5% allocations for similar sectors.Across all five corporations, however, development works continue to dominate spending. Central corporation leads with 63% of its budget allocated for development, followed by East at 62%, West at 60%, South at 47%, and North at 41%.In terms of solid waste management, North has allocated the highest share at 11%, while Central and West have set aside 9% each, and East and South 8% each.The report also highlights stark differences in revenue patterns.

BENGALURU HOTELS HIKE FOOD PRICES AFTER LPG CYLINDER COST RISE

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Hotels across Bengaluru have increased food prices following a rise in commercial LPG cylinder rates and reported gas shortages, impacting daily cooking costs and overall operations. Prices of popular food items such as dosa, idli, and chapati have gone up by ₹5–₹10, with some establishments raising rates by up to 10–15 per cent.Customers have expressed dissatisfaction over the price hike but say they have little choice but to continue purchasing food at higher rates.At Kadamba Hotel in Basaveshwara Nagar, prices of all menu items have been revised upward.

Fake number plate row: Lamborghini seized again, trouble mounts for Ricky Rai

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Fresh trouble has emerged for Ricky Rai, son of former don Muthappa Rai, as authorities intensified action in a fraud case involving the use of a fake number plate on a luxury Lamborghini.

According to investigators, the vehicle was being driven with the number plate KA 05 NR0009, which was found to be unregistered in official Regional Transport Office (RTO) records. The misuse of the number led to the registration of a fraud case.

Police have seized the Lamborghini once again and placed it under Property Form (PF), submitting it before a court as part of the ongoing probe. Authorities have also issued a notice asking Ricky Rai to appear for questioning.

This is not the first instance of action against the vehicle. Earlier, Cubbon Park traffic police had seized the car for reckless drifting on city roads. Officials said Rai had reportedly purchased the vehicle in Delhi and later paid ₹5 lakh to obtain a fancy number. However, the number was never formally registered to the car. Despite being fined ₹35 lakh by the RTO in October for violations, the car continued to be used with the unregistered plate.

The repeated violations, including dangerous driving and misuse of registration, have escalated the matter into a criminal investigation.

Sources said Rai has now applied for proper registration at the Central RTO but must first clear the pending ₹35 lakh fine and applicable taxes.

Meanwhile, authorities believe Rai is currently in Russia, even as they await his appearance for further questioning in the case.

BDA to draft separate Master Plan 2041 for areas beyond GBA limits

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has initiated steps to prepare a Revised Master Plan 2041 for areas outside the jurisdiction of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), marking a strategic shift towards planning the city's expanding periphery.

The BDA issued a tender notification on April 1 to begin the process. The move follows the transfer of planning powers within GBA limits to the municipal body, effectively ending BDA's role in core city planning. The agency will now focus on nearly 500 sq km of land beyond GBA limits.

Officials said this vast expanse includes large tracts of revenue land, which are expected to play a key role in Bengaluru's future urban growth. The tendering process is likely to be completed within two months, after which work on the master plan will commence.The proposed plan will focus on optimising land use, with an emphasis on converting revenue lands into residential, commercial, and mixed-use zones. The initiative aligns with efforts to decentralise development and ease pressure on the already saturated core city.Planners believe this approach could promote balanced urban expansion while improving infrastructure planning in emerging areas. However, experts stress that coordination between BDA and GBA will be crucial to ensure seamless development.

HI-TECH CHEATING

Fake Infosys CSR officials dupe Bengaluru firm of ₹6 crore

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A major case of impersonation and financial fraud has surfaced in Bengaluru, with Mysore Mercantile Company Ltd (MMCL) alleging that a group posed as senior Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) officials of Infosys Ltd and cheated the firm of ₹6 crore.

According to a complaint filed by MMCL executive Sridhar, the fraud took place between September 1, 2025 and March 20, 2026. The accused, identified as Gagan N Deep, along with Chetan, Tejas and others, are currently absconding.

Police said Gagan allegedly introduced himself as a Regional Head (CSR) at Infosys and claimed to be reporting to senior officials. He gained the trust of MMCL by expressing interest in funding projects undertaken by the Heggunje Rajeeva Shetty Charitable Trust in Bengaluru.

To appear credible, the accused reportedly conducted field visits in Udupi, Mangaluru and other locations, posing as company representatives and reviewing project sites. Investigators said this created the impression of a legitimate due diligence process.The complainant was then persuaded to pay large sums as Earnest Money Deposits, claimed to be necessary for securing CSR grants. Acting on these assurances, MMCL transferred ₹6 crore through multiple demand drafts to entities such as Anitha Ventures and ANS Engineerings. An additional ₹30 lakh was allegedly handed over in cash near Devanahalli.

Police said forged sanction letters and grant agreements worth over ₹350 crore were also issued to reinforce the deception. Suspicion arose when promised funds failed to materialise and the accused became untraceable.

QUICK READ

Hunsur taluk prepares for upcoming census exercise

Hunsur

Hunsur taluk is preparing for the upcoming census, with training for enumerators and supervisors scheduled from April 3 to 11 at San Joseph School, officials said. Tahsildar J. Manjunath briefed journalists at the taluk office about the plan. A total of 569 enumerators and 90 supervisors, trained by 10 field trainers from Mysuru, will collect household data starting April 16. The 2011 census recorded a population of 2,82,963, which is projected to reach 3,30,388 by 2027. Residents are urged to provide accurate information to ensure reliable census data. Headman Shripad also attended the briefing.

Ayurvedic student dies by suicide in Chitradurga

Chitradurga

A 23-year-old Ayurvedic medical student died by suicide at her home in Holalkere town, police said. The deceased, Nikita, had completed her final year and was doing an internship at a local Ayurveda college hospital. According to sources, she left a death note mentioning mental distress and allegations involving a professor, along with naming a few individuals. Based on the note, police have registered a case against some persons, including the professor's wife, and started an investigation. Officials said further inquiry is underway to find the exact reasons behind the tragic incident and to take appropriate legal action.

Health officials urge parents to accept HPV vaccine

District Health Officer Krishna Nayak urged timely HPV vaccination for girls, assuring safety and effectiveness in preventing cervical cancer, supported by 15 years of global data

CHITRADURGA

Health officials in D. Madakaripura village stepped up efforts to convince parents about the importance of the HPV vaccine, which protects young girls from cervical cancer.

District Health Education Officer Krishna Nayak said the vaccine is highly effective and safe. He urged parents to ensure their daughters receive it on time to protect their future health. The awareness program was held by a district-level IEC team along with Health Department staff.

Officials explained that the HPV vaccine is not new and has already been given to more than 50 crore people worldwide. Data collected over the past 15 years confirms that the vaccine is safe and helps prevent cervical cancer effectively.

According to government guidelines, girls aged between 14 and 15 years are eligible to receive the vaccine free of cost. Health workers encouraged parents to make use of this facility without hesitation.

Area Health Education Officer B. Janaki said the Human Papilloma Virus is common and spreads through infections, mainly affecting women. He added that this virus is one of the main causes of cervical cancer, but early vaccination can prevent the disease. To reach more families, health staff visited homes of those who had refused vaccination and created awareness. They explained that protecting children's health is the primary responsibility of parents. Senior officials, health workers, ASHA staff, and Anganwadi workers took part in the campaign, helping build trust among villagers.

Officials said such awareness drives will continue to ensure maximum vaccination coverage and safeguard the health of young girls in the district.

Civic issues in Chikkaballapura spark fresh appeal

Concerns included royal canal encroachments causing floods, delayed widening of Bazaar and Gangammana Gudi roads affecting commuters, and deteriorating Kalyanis needing urgent restoration before monsoon

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Kannada Sena has urged the District Collector to address long-pending civic problems in Chikkaballapura city and improve basic facilities for residents.

In a letter submitted to the administration, the organization said that even after 18 years of being a district headquarters, several key issues remain unresolved. Though officials and public representatives have held meetings and inspections, only partial progress has been made so far.

One major concern raised was the encroachment of royal canals across the city. Due to blocked water flow, rainwater often enters residential areas, causing inconvenience to people. The group requested immediate clearance of encroachments before the monsoon season.

Another issue highlighted was the delay in widening Bazaar Road and Gangammana Gudi Road. Heavy traffic during morning hours, especially affecting students and daily commuters, has become a serious problem. The Sena demanded urgent road expansion to ensure smooth movement.

The condition of ancient Kalyanis in the city was also raised. Although they were cleaned earlier, lack of maintenance has led to their deterioration. The group appealed for restoration work to preserve these heritage water bodies.

Additionally, the road below Kandavarakere, connecting Ward No. 14 and nearby areas, is in poor condition. Residents face difficulties, especially ambulances and daily travelers. The Sena requested immediate repairs to ensure better connectivity.

District President V. Ravikumar, Vice President Shravan Kumar, City President P. Vijayakumar, and other members were present during the submission.

Officials are expected to review the demands and take necessary steps to resolve the issues at the earliest.

Newlyweds die in tragic Chikkaballapura road accident

CHIKKABALLAPURA

A tragic road accident near Shettigere Cross on the Bengaluru–Hyderabad National Highway claimed two lives and left one person seriously injured on Friday. The victims, Rakshita Reddy (23) and Pawan Reddy (30), died when their car crashed into a container lorry ahead. Rakshita's husband, Rajasekhar Reddy, who married her just five months ago, suffered severe injuries and was shifted to a Bengaluru hospital. The couple, along with their friend, was traveling to a village when the accident occurred. Police said the car was badly damaged due to the impact and have registered a case.

Farmers await compensation amid STRR Project delay

BENGALURU

Dr. C. N. Manjunath, Member of Parliament from Bangalore Rural, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi today to request urgent intervention for releasing pending land acquisition compensation linked to the Bangalore Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR) project. Dr. Manjunath highlighted that while land acquisition for the STRR project in Magadi, Ramanagara, Kanakapura, Harohalli, and Anekal regions has been completed, farmers have not yet received full compensation. This delay has caused financial difficulties for landowners and growing dissatisfaction among local residents.

He added that the matter has already been raised with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, and discussions have also involved former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda. All project-related approvals and clearances have been obtained, and the proposal is now awaiting final Union Cabinet approval.

During the meeting, Union Home Minister Amit Shah assured Dr. Manjunath that the issue would be examined with the concerned departments and necessary action would be taken promptly.

Dr. Manjunath emphasized the importance of the STRR project for the development of Bangalore Rural and stated that timely release of compensation would restore confidence among the affected farmers. He urged the Central Government to expedite the process so that farmers receive their dues without further delay.

The MP expressed hope that with intervention from the Union Home Ministry, compensation payments would be disbursed soon, helping farmers recover from financial strain and supporting smoother progress of the STRR project.

Dr. Guruling Kapase Literary Award Presented to Veena Shanteshwar, Channabasavanna

DHARWAD

The Dr. Guruling Kapase Literary Award ceremony was held at the R.H. Deshpande Hall of Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha in Dharwad, honouring senior writer Dr. Veena Shanteshwar and Lohia Publications publisher C. Channabasavanna for their contribution to literature and social thought. The award, which carries a cash prize of ₹25,000 and a memento, was presented amid a gathering of writers, social activists and family members of the late Dr. Guruling Kapase. A student award of ₹5,000 was also presented to M.A. student Rajeshwari Hulmani to encourage academic excellence.

Delivering the award, BL Patil, president of the Devadasi Rehabilitation Organisation, Athani, described Dr. Kapase as a saintly personality whose life continues to inspire generations. He said Kapase's journey from a primary school teacher to a university professor reflected dedication and achievement in education.

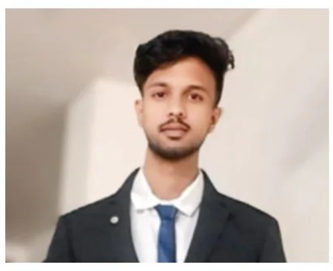
Social activist Dr. Siddanagowda Patil praised both awardees for their contribution to society, noting that Dr. Veena's writings raised awareness on women's issues, while Channabasavanna promoted meaningful literature through publishing initiatives.

Speaking after receiving the honour, Dr. Veena Shanteshwar highlighted Kapase's intellectual openness and his lifelong message of peace and linguistic harmony. Channabasavanna said his mission has been to spread Lohia ideology among youth and contribute to literary service, announcing part of his award money for student support.

The programme was attended by Kapase's family members, including children and grandchildren, with one daughter joining virtually from the United States.

PES Mandya students secure global placements in top firms

MANDYA



PES Engineering College, Mandya, has marked a major milestone in the 2025–26 academic year, with four students securing placements in reputed international companies, reinforcing the institution's focus on global career opportunities.

Founded by the late K.V. Shankaragowda, the college has steadily strengthened its academic and training frameworks to prepare students for overseas employment. Authorities said the latest achievements reflect a strong blend of technical education and global exposure.

Under the leadership of President K.S. Vijay Anand, the institution has expanded international collaborations, enabling students to access job opportunities abroad. The Training and Placement Department, along with Principal Dr. N.L. Murali Krishna, Vice Principal Dr. Vinay S., and Placement Officer Deepthi K.P., played a key role in facilitating the recruitment process.

Japan-based Zenken Corporation supported the initiative by connecting students with companies in Japan, while also providing language training, cultural orientation, career guidance, and visa assistance.

Among the 2026 placements, Hitashree L (CSE) joined Spike Studio, Sandeep Kumar (ME) was placed at Star Seiki Co. Ltd., Tripti G (Civil) at Taguchi Pattern Works Co. Ltd., and Sohana M.V. (ECE) at Daido Steel Co. Ltd.

The college has maintained a consistent record, with students placed in Oman and Japan in previous academic years.

Congratulating the students, Vijay Anand said, "Their success reflects sustained effort and strong institutional support. We are confident they will excel in their global careers."

The college noted that such achievements highlight its emphasis on technical excellence, language skills, and cultural adaptability for international success.

Little graduates shine at Srinivaspur School

SRINIVASPUR

The Maulana Azad Model School in Srinivaspur celebrated the LKG Graduation Day with joy and excitement, marking the completion of the academic year for its youngest students. The school, run under the Department of Minority Welfare, emphasized the importance of primary education as the foundation for a child's future learning.

Speakers highlighted that discipline, values, and basic knowledge acquired at this stage play a key role in shaping a child's personality. They also noted that events like these boost children's confidence and encourage them to express themselves on public platforms.

During the celebration, LKG students wore graduation gowns and caps as they proudly walked onto the stage to receive certificates. The moment brought immense happiness to their parents, who cheered and applauded the young achievers.

Teachers reiterated the school's commitment to holistic development, focusing not just on academics but also on value-based learning. They praised the efforts of parents and students, stating that the success of the children is the result of a combined effort.

Parents expressed their satisfaction, appreciating the dedication of the teaching staff. They noted that such events motivate children and enhance their interest in learning.

The graduation program concluded in a cheerful and celebratory atmosphere, with everyone acknowledging the importance of nurturing young minds and encouraging their early achievements. The school plans to continue similar initiatives to foster growth, confidence, and enthusiasm among its students.

MARKET DEMAND SLUMPS

Vegetable prices plunge in Chikkaballapura market

CHIKKABALLAPURA

Vegetable prices have fallen sharply in the Chikkaballapura APMC market, leaving farmers worried about losses. The drop comes amid indirect effects of the Iran-Israel war, which has disrupted normal supply and demand.

Traders report that hotels and eateries remain closed due to cooking gas shortages, reducing demand for fresh vegetables. As a result, fewer buyers are coming to the market, forcing prices down.

Currently, tomatoes are selling for Rs 10–12 per kilogram, carrots for Rs 8–10, cucumbers at Rs 200–250 per bundle, radishes for Rs 5–6, and navakolu for Rs 5–6. Beans, which sold for Rs 100–120 last year, are now priced at Rs 30–40 per kilogram.

Farmers say the sharp decline is hurting their incomes, especially during summer when demand is usually higher. Market officials and growers are urging authorities to find solutions to stabilize vegetable prices and support local farmers amid ongoing supply disruptions.

Document Lost

Sri Ranga Naika M.G. S/o Guru, and Vijay Nayaka M.G. S/o Guru, resident of: Tatavalu Road, Kalya Gate, Magadi Town, Bangalore South District, in respect of the plot of land No. 1621-55B, Vidyanagar, Municipality Area, Magadi Town, Bangalore South District, K.N. Jayashankar son of Nagarajaiah, resident of: Kalya Village, Kasaba, Hobli, Magadi Taluk, has registered Rectification deed on our behalf, the Rectification deed number of which is MGD-1- 04673/14-15. Khaneshunari No. 245/14/47/71, The Rectification deed was lost on the way to Magadi Bus Stand on 24-03-2026. If found, please contact the above address or mobile number immediately: 9980877890 or contact Advocate: Lakshmi Prasad, Advocate, Magadi, Mobile No. 9743828060.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SHAKEEBA TABASSUM**, W/o MOHAMMED NOWSHEER AHMED SHARIFF, resident of No: 4, 1st Cross, Kanakanagar, R T Nagar Post Bangalore – 560032. Have changed my name to **SHAKEEBA NOWSHEER**, vide affidavit dated: 03.03.2026, before Notary C SHARADA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **HAFSAH FATHIMA FAQRUDDIN**, D/o FAQRUDDIN ALI AHMED, resident of Door no 2387, 7th Cross, Haneefa Masjid Main Road, Kushal Nagar, Kadugondanahalli, A C Post, Bangalore – 560045. Have changed my name to **HAFSAH FATHIMA**, vide affidavit dated: 02.03.2026, before Notary C SHARADA, Bengaluru.

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QUICK READ

Two arrested; 28.46 gm of smack recovered

NEW DELHI

In a significant crackdown on narcotics, the Central District Police of Delhi have arrested two drug peddlers, including a narcotics supplier, and recovered a total of 28.46 grams of smack along with cash and a weighing machine, officials said on Friday. The operation was carried out by the team of Sidhipura Police Post under DBG Road Police Station, following sustained surveillance and questioning. According to the police, the case dates back to March 31, when constables Vishal and Shishram were on routine patrolling duty near Loco Railway Colony in the Kishanganj area.

Govt pushes induction heaters to reduce cooking gas use

NEW DELHI

Top government officials including the Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the Power Secretary, and the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) held a meeting on Friday to discuss ways to increase the domestic production of induction heaters and cooking utensils to bring down the use of cooking gas consumption amid supply chain disruptions due to the Iran war, according to official sources. Demand for induction heaters and other electrical products has increased significantly since the West Asia crisis began. If the war continues for several months, India must be prepared to deal with potential challenges, a senior official said.

Seer Welcomes Proposal to Relocate Meat Shops Ahead of Ardh Kumbh

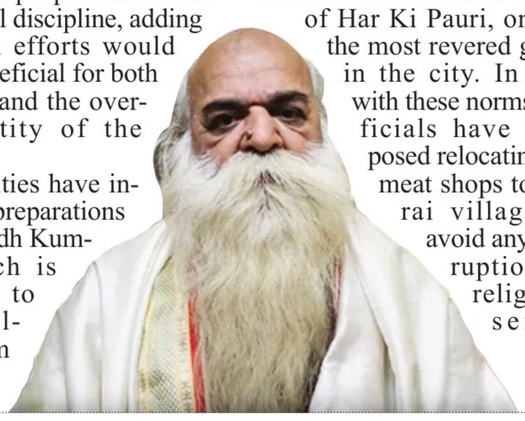
A prominent religious leader has expressed support for the proposed relocation of raw meat shops from Haridwar's urban areas to its outskirts ahead of the 2027 Ardh Kumbh

HARIDWAR

Acharya Ayodhya Prasad Shastri has welcomed the administration's plan to shift all raw meat shops operating within the city limits to Sarai village, located on the outskirts of Haridwar. He stated that such a move would help maintain a spiritually conducive environment for saints, pilgrims, and devotees expected to gather in large numbers for the Ardh Kumbh in 2027.

The seer pointed out that Haridwar is one of the holiest cities in India and hosts millions of devotees during the Kumbh period. According to him, the presence of meat shops in such a sacred setting could disrupt the spiritual discipline observed by ascetics and practitioners engaged in rituals, meditation, and vows. He noted that saints arriving for the event often follow strict religious practices, and encountering anything considered inappropriate may lead to discomfort or a perceived loss of spiritual purity.

He further stressed that maintaining a peaceful and pure atmosphere is essential for those undertaking deep meditation and religious observances. He described the initiative as necessary for preserving inner peace and ensuring the proper adherence to spiritual discipline, adding that such efforts would prove beneficial for both devotees and the overall sanctity of the event.



Authorities have intensified preparations for the Ardh Kumbh, which is expected to draw millions from across India and abroad. Existing municipal bylaws already prohibit the sale and consumption of meat, liquor, and eggs within a five-kilometre radius of Har Ki Pauri, one of the most revered ghats in the city. In line with these norms, officials have proposed relocating all meat shops to Sarai village to avoid any disruption to religious sentiments.

Meanwhile, Anand Vardhan recently reviewed ongoing preparations during a visit to Haridwar. He conducted on-site inspections of infrastructure projects and directed officials to complete all works within stipulated timelines while maintaining high quality standards.

The administration has reiterated its commitment to ensuring smooth and efficient arrangements for the grand religious congregation, which transforms Haridwar into a major spiritual hub every six years.

Manipur doctor saves passenger during mid-air emergency

IMPHAL

Dr Loni Lirina, a critical care specialist at the American Oncology Institute, Babina Specialty Hospital in Imphal, stepped in when a 21-year-old woman onboard an Air India flight began experiencing acute breathing difficulties mid-air. The incident occurred during the flight from Tokyo to New Delhi, prompting the cabin crew to make an urgent announcement seeking medical assistance. Responding immediately, Dr Lirina assessed the passenger's condition and identified severe respiratory distress. She quickly initiated emergency care, recommending oxygen support, nebulisation, and the administration of essential medications. Her swift and precise intervention proved crucial, as the passenger's condition began to stabilise within 30 minutes, averting the need for an emergency landing. According to Dr Lirina, the young woman had a history of childhood asthma but had not been on medication for several years. At the time of examination, the patient's condition was critical, with a heart rate exceeding 160 beats per minute, low blood pressure, and oxygen saturation levels at just 80 percent on room air. Following timely medical intervention, her vitals improved significantly, and she was brought out of immediate danger. The flight later landed safely in New Delhi, where the passenger was reported to be in stable condition. The incident has drawn widespread appreciation for Dr Lirina's professionalism and composure under pressure. Yumnam Khemchand Singh lauded the doctor's life-saving efforts, calling it a testament to both skill and compassion. He praised her swift response, clinical excellence, and dedication to the medical profession, noting that such acts bring pride to the state and serve as an inspiration to others.

Amit Shah Confident of NDA Return in Assam, Targets Congress at Dudhnoi Rally

GUWAHATI

Addressing a large gathering in Dudhnoi, Amit Shah asserted that voters in Assam have resolved to support the National Democratic Alliance once again to safeguard the state's culture, identity, and future. He accused the Indian National Congress of exploiting the deaths of Assamese youth for political gains and fostering instability in the region for decades.

In contrast, Shah said the BJP-led government has focused on restoring peace by signing multiple accords and bringing nearly 10,000 youth into the mainstream after persuading them to give up arms.

He also took a strong stance on illegal infiltration, alleging that previous governments had allowed Assam to become a hub for infiltrators. He assured the crowd that decisive action would be taken if the NDA is given another term in power.

Highlighting welfare initiatives, Shah promised the establishment of large dairy units in every district of the state and support for tribal households through livestock distribution. He emphasised that these were not mere electoral promises but commitments that would be fulfilled under his role as Cooperation Minister.

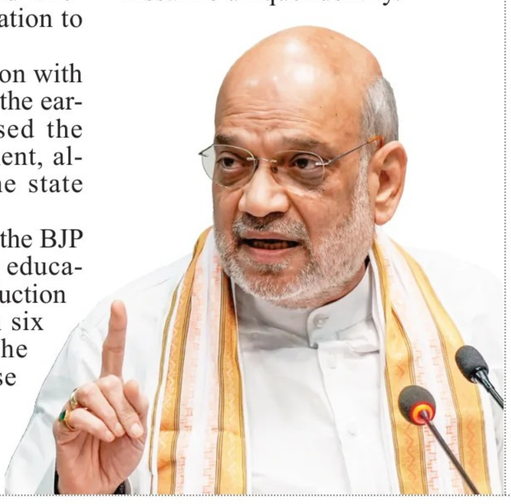
The Union Minister also credited Narendra Modi for promoting tribal culture on the global stage, contrasting it with what he described as the Congress party's neglect of indigenous communities.

Referring to the election of Droupadi Murmu, he said it reflected the NDA's dedication to tribal empowerment.

Recalling his association with the Assam movement in the early 1990s, Shah criticised the then Congress government, alleging it had turned the state into a conflict zone.

He further highlighted the BJP government's efforts in education, including the introduction of primary education in six tribal languages and the recognition of Assamese as a classical language.

He accused the Congress of spreading misinformation to create fear among indigenous groups. He also outlined cultural initiatives undertaken by the NDA government, including honouring Assamese icons, building memorials for Assam Agitation martyrs, and securing UNESCO heritage status for Charaideo Maidam. Urging voters to support the BJP-led alliance under Prime Minister Modi and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Shah said the NDA represents peace, development, and protection of Assam's unique identity.



Cyclist Killed, Motorcyclist Critically Injured in Highway Crash

RAIPUR

A tragic road accident on National Highway-30 in Chhattisgarh claimed the life of a cyclist and left a motorcyclist critically injured early Friday morning, once again raising concerns over reckless driving by heavy vehicles on national highways.

The accident occurred around 4 a.m. between Chichadi and Manjhi Athgaon under the jurisdiction of Farsagaon Police Station in Kondagaon district. According to police officials, a speeding truck first collided with a motorcyclist before crashing into two cyclists riding along National Highway 30.

The impact of the collision was extremely severe, leading to the immediate death of one cyclist at the scene.

The motorcyclist, who was also caught in the chain of crashes, sustained serious injuries and was rushed to the district hospital in Kondagaon.

Police sources confirmed that his condition remains critical. The second cyclist's condition has not been clearly detailed, and authorities are continuing to assess the situation.

Officials stated that both the deceased cyclist and the injured motorcyclist have not yet been identified. Police teams quickly reached the accident site and began preliminary investigations. The truck driver, however, reportedly fled the scene immediately after the incident, prompting a manhunt by authorities.

A case has been registered against the unidentified driver under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Motor Vehicles Act.

RUHS to Be Upgraded into RIMS in Jaipur, Chief Secretary Reviews Progress

JAIPUR

In a major step towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure in Rajasthan, the state government is transforming Rajasthan University of Health Sciences (RUHS) Hospital into the Rajasthan Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), modeled on AIIMS, with officials directed to expedite the project's completion.

Aligned with the vision of Bhajan Lal Sharma, the ambitious project aims to convert Rajasthan University of Health Sciences Hospital into a world-class medical institute comparable to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. The initiative is expected to significantly enhance healthcare delivery, research capabilities, and patient services across the state.

During a visit to the RUHS campus in Jaipur, V. Srinivas held detailed discussions with senior officials from the Department of Medical Education and medical experts from leading national institutions. Acting on the state budget announcement, he instructed officials to accelerate the pace of work and ensure the early establishment of RIMS.

The Chief Secretary emphasized that the upgraded institute would play a crucial role in reducing the burden on Sawai Man Singh Hospital, which currently handles a heavy patient load. He described the transformation as a key step in strengthening Rajasthan's healthcare system while promoting medical research, innovation, and advanced treatment facilities.

He directed officials to remove all bottlenecks delaying the project and to expedite necessary approvals.

Stressing a mission-mode approach, he called for phased development of infrastructure, timely procurement of modern medical equipment, and expansion of specialist healthcare services.

DESI FARMS INDIA LIMITED
CIN: L60231KA1963PLC004604
Regd. Address: Chikkakuntanahalli Village, Bidadi Hobli Ramnagaram Taluk, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, 562109
Corporate Office: Plot No 79, 501, 5th Floor Lalwani House, Sakore Nagar Viman Nagar, Pune, Maharashtra, India, 411014
Email: info.serindustries@gmail.com | **Website:** www.ser-industries.co.in

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to SEBI Circular SEBI/HO/MIRSD/DOS3/CIR/P/2018/139 dated 6th November 2018 and SEBI Circular SEBI/HO/MIRSD/MIRSD-PoD/P/CIR/2025/97 dated 2nd July, 2025, the following requests as detailed below have been received by the Company to transfer the securities held in the name(s) of the security holder(s) to the name(s) of the proposed transferee(s).

These securities were claimed to have been purchased by him / her / them and could not be transferred in his / her / their favour.

Sr. No.	Folio no	Security type & face value	Holder name(s)	Registered address of holder	No of shares	Distinctive nos	Proposed Transferee name(s)	Proposed Transferee address
1	SZK0000605	Equity & face value Rs 10/-	Kumar Tarachand Kukreja Gopal Tarachand Kukreja	Flat No 3, Guru Kripa, Plot 434, 14th Road , Tps III Khar, Mumbai 400052	300	611091 to 611390	INDRA KUMAR BAGRI	BL-12, Sector-2, Salt Lake, Kolkata, 700091

Any person who has a claim in respect of the above securities, should lodge such claim with the Company at its Corporate Office within 30 days from this date along with appropriate documentary evidence thereof in support of such claim, else the Company will proceed to transfer the securities in favour of the transferee(s), without any further intimation.

For, **Desi Farms India Limited**
(Formerly known as **SER Industries Limited**)
Sd/-
Sunil Kumar Shahi
Managing Director (DIN: 01887403)

Place: Bangalore | Date:03-04-2026

Government of Karnataka
Shivamogga Institute of Medical Sciences
An Autonomous Institute of Medical Sciences, Sagar Road,
Shivamogga - 577 201. Phone : 08182 229933/269701,
FAX :08182 264100, Website : **sims.karnataka.gov.in**

No: SIMS/ADM/WI-21/2019-20/01 **Date: 01.04.2026**

NOTIFICATION

ವಿಷಯ: ದಿ:16–11–2019 ರ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಟಿ,ಬಿ, & ಚೆಸ್ಟ್ ಮತ್ತು ಸೈಕ್ಯಾಟ್ರಿ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಸಹ ಪ್ರಾಧ್ಯಾಪಕರ ಹುದ್ದೆಯ ನೇರ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆಯನ್ನು ರದ್ದುಗೊಳಿಸುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ.

ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ 1. ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10.12.2025ರಂದು ನಡೆದ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ 35ನೇ ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿ ಸಭೆಯ ನಡವಳಿ,

2. ದಿನಾಂಕ:20.12.2025ರ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕಾನೂನು ಸಲಹೆಗಾರರ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯ ಪತ್ರ,

ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ, ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಗಳ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಟಿ,ಬಿ, & ಚೆಸ್ಟ್ ಮತ್ತು ಸೈಕ್ಯಾಟ್ರಿ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಸಹ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ **No: SIMS/ADM/WI-21/2019-20/1261 Date: 16.11.2019** ರಂತೆ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿ, ದಿನಾಂಕ : 03.12.2019 ರಂದು ಸಹ ಪ್ರಾಧ್ಯಾಪಕರ ಹುದ್ದೆಗೆ ಸಂದರ್ಶನದ ನಡೆಸಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ, ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ 35ನೇ ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿ ಸಭೆಯ ನಿರ್ಣಯದಂತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕಾನೂನು ಸಲಹೆಗಾರರ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯದಂತೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.11.2019 ರಂದು ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾದ ಟಿ,ಬಿ, & ಚೆಸ್ಟ್ ಮತ್ತು ಸೈಕಾಟ್ರಿ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಸಹ ಪ್ರಾಧ್ಯಾಪಕರ ಹುದ್ದೆಯ ನೇರ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆಯನ್ನು ಹಿಂಪಡೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ,

Sd/- Director
Shivamogga Institute of Medical Sciences, Shivamogga

DIPR/SMG/No- 29/ZENKAR/2026-27

DEENDAYAL PORT ROB

Government Approves ₹132.51 Crore Road Over Bridge at Deendayal Port

NEW DELHI

In a major push to strengthen port-led infrastructure and logistics efficiency, the government on Friday approved the construction of a Road Over Bridge (ROB) at Deendayal Port in Gujarat at an estimated cost of ₹132.51 crore.

The project was approved by Sarbananda Sonowal, who highlighted its importance in enhancing seamless connectivity and reducing congestion at one of India's key ports. The ROB will be constructed at Deendayal Port and is expected to significantly improve cargo movement and operational efficiency.

Describing the project as a vital step in India's infrastructure development, Sonowal said it reflects the government's commitment to building modern and efficient transport systems under the leadership of Narendra Modi. He noted that the bridge would help eliminate critical bottlenecks, streamline logistics, and enhance overall trade facilitation. The project is aligned with flagship national initiatives such as the Sagarmala Programme and the PM Gati Shakti, both of which aim to create integrated and multi-modal infrastructure networks across the country. These initiatives focus on improving connectivity, ensuring safety, and supporting economic growth by reducing logistics costs and transit times.

Construction of the ROB is being undertaken by Western Railway on a deposit basis. The proposal was recently reviewed and appraised by the Delegated Investment Board during a meeting chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. Officials examined the revised project cost to ensure compliance with updated safety norms and technical standards.

The planned Road Over Bridge is expected to address long-standing logistical challenges at the port, particularly those related to congestion and delays in cargo handling. Once completed, the infrastructure upgrade will facilitate smoother movement of goods, improve turnaround time, and boost the port's overall efficiency.

The initiative marks another step towards developing world-class port infrastructure in India, reinforcing the country's ambition to emerge as a global maritime hub while supporting trade and economic expansion.

QUICK READ

Odisha Police arrest 2 excise department staff in Rs 3.67 cr fraud case

BHUBANESWAR

The Sambalpur police in Odisha have arrested two employees of the Excise Department, including a retired Excise Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), in connection with a case involving large-scale embezzlement of government funds worth over Rs 3.67 crore between 2022 and 2025, said Mukesh Kumar Bhamoo, Superintendent of Police, Sambalpur district, on Friday. The accused persons arrested in the fraud case have been identified as Sandeep Kumar Pattnaik, a junior assistant (currently under suspension), and Sarat Chandra Behera, a retired Excise ASI.

Rajasthan Police warn against phone lending cyber fraud

JAIPUR

A simple act of kindness, lending your mobile phone to a stranger for an urgent call, could now lead to a serious cyber fraud, Rajasthan police have warned. Acting on the directions of Director General of Police (DGP) Rajiv Kumar Sharma, the Cyber Crime Branch of the Rajasthan Police has issued a public advisory, warning citizens about emerging tactics used by cybercriminals to exploit unsuspecting individuals. DIG (Cyber Crime) Shantanu Kumar Singh explained that at bus stands, railway stations, parks, and tourist locations, fraudsters approach people claiming to need a phone for an urgent call.

BJP fields 27 candidates in key constituencies

CHENNAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday unveiled its list of candidates for the upcoming Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections, naming nominees for 27 constituencies as part of the AIADMK-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The announcement, made by the party's national leadership, signals a calibrated strategy by the BJP to strengthen its presence in the state by fielding prominent leaders in electorally significant constituencies. Among the names, former Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has been nominated from the prestigious Mylapore constituency in Chennai.

'State under narco-militancy', 'AAP responsible for spike

NEW DELHI

The Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on Friday, expressed concern about the current law and order situation in Punjab, saying that the state is again under narco-militancy. Additionally, the BJP held the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led state government responsible for increased terrorism in the state. The reactions come days after a low-intensity explosion was reported outside the BJP's office at Sector-37 in Chandigarh. Congress MP Manish Tewari said, The situation in Punjab is becoming increasingly sensitive. The state is under the grip of narco-militancy again, and its impact is now being felt in Chandigarh as well. There have been four incidents in the past 15 days, including one where a grenade-like thing was thrown outside the BJP office.

Magisterial Probe Ordered into Ganderbal Encounter Amid Civilian Death Allegations

Amid serious allegations by the family of the deceased that an encounter victim in J&K's Ganderbal district was an innocent civilian, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has ordered a time-bound magisterial probe into the incident

SRINAGAR

Manoj Sinha on Friday directed authorities to conduct a detailed inquiry into the encounter that took place on March 31 in Arhama village of Ganderbal district. The order, issued by the Home Department, mandates the District Magistrate to complete the probe within seven days and submit a report.

The incident occurred during a search and cordon operation carried out jointly by the army, Jammu and

Kashmir Police, and other security forces. Officials had initially claimed that a terrorist was killed in the operation. However, the family of the deceased, identified as Raashid Ahmad Mughal, has strongly contested this version, asserting that he was an innocent civilian with no links to militancy.

According to official communication, the magisterial inquiry will examine all aspects of the encounter and ascertain the exact circumstances that led to Mughal's death. Authorities have emphasized that the probe will be thorough and impartial, aimed at ensuring accountability and justice.

The issue has also drawn reactions from political leaders. Omar Abdullah stated that the family's claims should not be dismissed outright and called for a transparent and time-bound investigation. He stressed that any delay or lack of clarity in the probe could undermine public trust and credibility.

Similarly, Mehbooba Mufti expressed concern over the allegations and demanded an independent inquiry into the incident. She highlighted the need for a fair investigation to establish the truth and address the concerns raised by the victim's family.

The administration has reiterated its commitment to ensuring a credible investigation, with officials stating that the findings of the probe will be made available after completion. The case has sparked renewed debate over encounter operations and the importance of transparency and accountability in conflict-affected regions.

Delhi HC Rejects Bail for Foreign Heroin Accused

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has dismissed the bail application of a foreign national accused of possessing over 500 grams of heroin, holding that the rigours of Section 37 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act were attracted in the case.

The accused, Chibuzor, was arrested in connection with FIR No. 578/2022 registered at Vikaspuri police station under Section 21 of the NDPS Act and Section 14 of the Foreigners Act.

A single-judge Bench of Justice Girish Kathpalia noted that the quantity of heroin allegedly recovered from the accused was more than double the commercial quantity, thereby attracting the stringent conditions for the grant of bail under Section 37 of the NDPS Act.

According to the prosecution, acting on secret information, the police laid a trap and apprehended the accused, recovering the contraband from a bag carried by him after completing procedural formalities.

In support of the bail plea, counsel for the accused raised multiple contentions, including that the grounds of arrest were not verbally communicated to the accused, there were contradictions in the testimonies of prosecution witnesses, and the chain of custody of the seized contraband was doubtful.

It was also argued that the Head Constable who received the secret information was not competent to conduct the raid.

Opposing the bail plea, the prosecution argued that the recovery was effected following due procedure after a trap was laid on the basis of secret information, and the contraband was recovered from a bag carried by the accused.

Om Birla Participates in Census 2027 Self-Enumeration, Urges Citizens to Join

NEW DELHI

Om Birla completed his self-enumeration at his residence in New Delhi and described the exercise as the beginning of a new era in data collection and governance. Sharing his experience, he highlighted that for the first time, the census process is being conducted digitally, enabling citizens to independently record their household details in a secure, accurate, and user-friendly manner.

He urged people to take part in the process, not only by submitting their own details but also by motivating others to do the same. Emphasising the importance of the initiative, Birla said that public participation would contribute significantly to building a strong and prosperous nation, in line with the motto Census for Public Welfare.

The self-enumeration process is part of Census 2027, which marks a major shift from the traditional paper-based system followed for over 150 years. Citizens can complete their registration online through the official portal, with the timeline for participation varying across different states and Union Territories. Earlier, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah also completed their self-enumeration, setting an example for citizens. On Friday, Rajnath Singh joined the process and urged people to actively participate, stating that the initiative would help lay the foundation for a developed India.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday took part in the self-enumeration process for Census 2027, encouraging citizens across the country to actively participate in India's first fully digital census initiative.

The Census 2027 exercise is being conducted in two phases under the Census Act 1948. The first phase, known as the House Listing and Housing Census, focuses on collecting detailed information about housing conditions, household amenities, and assets. During this phase, citizens are required to respond to 33 notified questions.

Officials have emphasised that the digital approach will enhance efficiency, improve data accuracy, and streamline the overall process. The transition to a fully digital census is expected to play a crucial role in policy planning, governance, and welfare schemes, making it one of the most significant administrative exercises in the country's history.

Telangana aims to become textile capital of South Asia: CM Revanth

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Friday that his government aims to transform the state into the textile capital of South Asia by 2047.

Revanth Reddy assured the investors in the textile sector that the government will provide them with infrastructure, land, power, water, and incentives, along with expedited approvals.

Addressing the Asian Textile Conference 2026 here, he said that his goal is to ensure that garments made in Telangana are worn in every country across the globe.

He claimed that Telangana's policies are on par with global standards. Our greatest strength lies in our exceptional human resources. If you have the vision, we are the ideal partners for you. Together, let us build a complete textiles ecosystem capable of transforming the world, he said. He noted that Telangana was collaborating across a wide spectrum, from the cotton fields of Telangana to the fashion runways of London, New York, Paris, Milan, Tokyo, and Dubai.

The Chief Minister said that Hyderabad is emerging as a hub for film production not just for India, but for the entire world and pointed out that Netflix recently launched its Eyeline Studios here.

Tollywood and Bollywood already utilise Hyderabad as their base and now, Hollywood has joined their ranks. We will encourage the film industry to source its fashion requirements directly from Telangana, he said.

Stating that environmental protection is the government's utmost priority, he said green textile hubs will be developed in the state.

Maharashtra By-Elections Heat Up as Congress Eyes Baramati and Rahuri Seats

MUMBAI

The by-elections were necessitated by two tragic developments—the death of BJP MLA Shivajirao Kardile in Rahuri and the untimely demise of Ajit Pawar in a plane crash on January 28 in Baramati. Polling for both constituencies is scheduled for April 23, with counting set to take place on May 4.

The Indian National Congress has begun preparations in full swing, with Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president Harshvardhan Sapkal confirming that candidate selection is already underway. He stated that six applications have been received for the Baramati seat, while four candidates have applied for Rahuri. Interviews have been conducted, and the final decision will be taken after consultations with allies in the Maha Vikas Aghadi.

Meanwhile, the Nationalist Congress Party has announced that Sunetra Pawar will file her nomination for the Baramati seat on April 6, with the party planning a major show of strength.

Reacting to Congress' decision, Sanjay Raut stressed the importance of consensus within the MVA alliance. He referred to a sense of family duty associated with Baramati, indicating that Sharad Pawar's faction might refrain from contesting the seat out of respect for the late Ajit Pawar. However, he added that if other parties choose to contest, the alliance should collectively decide its strategy.

On the Rahuri seat, Raut noted that Prajakt Tanpure had previously performed strongly and could be a potential candidate again. He also took a subtle dig at Congress, suggesting that the party often contests widely without fully assessing its ground strength.

Tanpure has expressed interest in contesting on behalf of the NCP (SP) with MVA backing, though a final decision is yet to be made. As political negotiations continue among alliance partners, the upcoming by-elections are shaping up to be a crucial test of strength and coordination within Maharashtra's opposition bloc.

Ujjain to become 'Time Capital'& Science City; MP CM

UJJAIN

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, on Friday, announced ambitious plans to develop Ujjain as the global Time Capital and a modern Science City, while promoting nearby Dongla village as a key centre for astronomical time calculation.

Addressing the International Conference Mahakal: The Master of Time, Chief Minister Yadav said that Ujjain is not just a city of spirituality and religion but also a historic centre of science. He inaugurated a new science facility in Ujjain developed at a cost of Rs 15.5 crore with support from the Union government.

Ujjain will be developed as the 'Time Capital' of the world. We are also setting up a Science City here with an investment of Rs 15 crore, Chief Minister Yadav said. He highlighted the unique astronomical significance of the region. Scholars tell us that in ancient times, the point where the sun's shadow can be distinctly observed was in Ujjain. Today, that alignment has shifted about 32 km to Dongla village. This entire cycle spans nearly 27,500 years. The dynamics of this movement are truly extraordinary, he added. The Chief Minister noted that he had earlier upgraded the planetarium in Dongla during his tenure as Chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Corporation and is now working to transform the area into a modern hub for scientific inquiry. Chief Minister Yadav has been consistently advocating for the revival of Ujjain's ancient astronomical glory and positioning it as the world's prime meridian -- the zero-degree longitude line used globally for time calculation.

BENGAL BJP ROW

Mamata Banerjee Accuses BJP of Plot to Divide WB Ahead of Polls

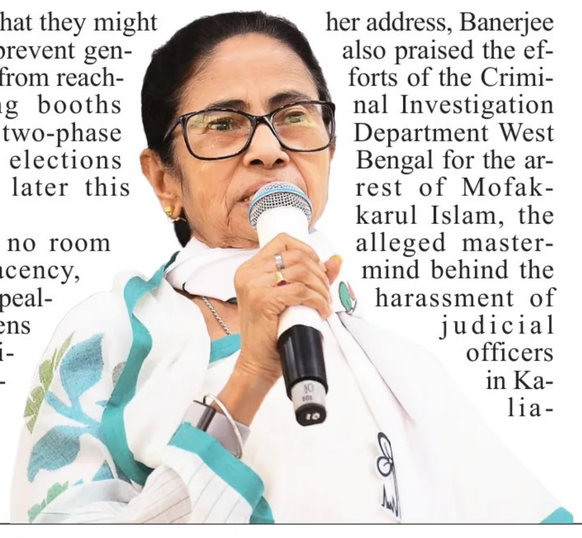
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday launched a sharp attack on the BJP, alleging a conspiracy to divide the state through Assembly seat rearrangement if the party comes to power, while urging voters to remain vigilant ahead of the upcoming elections.

Addressing a campaign rally in Harirampur, Mamata Banerjee claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party is planning to redraw Assembly constituencies in a way that could lead to the division of West Bengal. She alleged that the plan involves carving out a separate state by combining parts of Bihar and West Bengal, and warned that such a move could only materialise if the BJP comes to power in the state.

Calling on voters to defeat the BJP in the upcoming elections, Banerjee urged people to remain alert and actively participate in the democratic process.

She also raised concerns about the role of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), cautioning that they might be used to prevent genuine voters from reaching polling booths during the two-phase Assembly elections scheduled later this month.



There is no room for complacency, she said, appealing to citizens to stay vigilant and ensure free and fair polling.

During her address, Banerjee also praised the efforts of the Criminal Investigation Department West Bengal for the arrest of Mofakkarul Islam, the alleged mastermind behind the harassment of judicial officers in Kaliachak, Malda district. She highlighted that the CID acted swiftly and apprehended the accused even before the National Investigation Agency team reached the state.

According to her, the accused had arrived from Mumbai and was planning to flee via Bagdogra Airport.

The Chief Minister further accused the BJP of attempting to influence voters through monetary inducements. She alleged that agents linked to the party were seeking bank account details from citizens to transfer money and influence votes. She warned people against sharing such sensitive financial information.

Later, speaking at another rally in Raiganj, Banerjee reiterated her claims, stating that she had detailed information about agencies allegedly engaged by the BJP to bring large sums of cash into the state for distribution among voters.

As campaigning intensifies, the exchange of sharp allegations underscores the high-stakes political battle in West Bengal ahead of the Assembly elections.

QUICK READ

Deadly floods ravage Balochistan, roads cut off

Quetta

Heavy rains and flash floods hit Balochistan, killing seven people and injuring four. Dozens of homes were destroyed, over 50 livestock drowned, and hundreds of acres of crops lost across Kachhi, Nasirabad, Jhal Magsi, Sibi, Harnai, Kohlu, Turbat, and other districts. Lightning strikes and collapsing roofs claimed several lives. Major roads, including Harnai-Quetta and Quetta-Sanjawi highways, were washed away, isolating communities. Emergency teams are conducting rescue and relief work. A mini-coach carrying women and children was safely rescued in Qila Abdullah.

Four more Baloch civilians vanish mysteriously

Quetta

Four Baloch civilians have reportedly disappeared in Balochistan, raising fresh human rights concerns, Paank, a local rights group. Among the missing are students Kareem, Shayhaq Rahim, Noor Khan, and Sameer, allegedly abducted in broad daylight by armed individuals or military personnel. Past disappearances of prominent figures, including retired Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Bakhsh Sajidi and his relatives, highlight a growing pattern of enforced disappearances in the province. Paank condemned the acts as severe violations of fundamental rights, warning that such actions cause trauma and fear in communities.

South Korea, France unite for Hormuz security

Seoul

Lee Jae Myung and Emmanuel Macron agreed to cooperate on securing safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz amid regional tensions. Their talks focused on strengthening energy security, trade, and economic stability. Agreements were signed covering nuclear and wind energy, advanced technologies, critical minerals, and cultural exchange. Both leaders highlighted the importance of peace on the Korean Peninsula and global stability. Lee welcomed France's G7 invitation and praised elevating ties to a global strategic partnership, marking 140 years of bilateral friendship.

Iran defends history against American military threats

Iran dismissed Donald Trump's military threats as ignorance, defending its ancient civilization while warning against potential war crimes

NEW YORK

Iran has delivered a sharp response to recent comments made by Donald Trump, choosing to defend its ancient culture while rejecting threats of war. The disagreement began after reports surfaced that Trump threatened to "bomb Iran back to the Stone Age" during a discussion regarding potential military actions.

In a statement released by Iran's mission to the United Nations, officials called the threat a sign of "ignorance" rather than a display of power. They warned that using such language could be viewed as an intent to commit war crimes under international rules. Instead of focusing only on military talk, Iran highlighted its deep roots, reminding the world that its civilization has survived for thousands of years and cannot be wiped out by force.

The mission pointed out that a nation is built on more than just weapons; it is shaped by history, art, and science. They noted that Iranian scholars have contributed to global knowledge for centuries.

Meanwhile, a top commander from the Revolutionary Guard dismissed the American statements as unrealistic, warning that any aggressive moves would lead to serious trouble.

As the back-and-forth continues, tensions between the two countries have reached a new high. Trump has suggested that military operations could actually pick up speed in the next few weeks, which has many people around the world feeling nervous. For now, international observers are calling for both sides to stop the tough talk and start a conversation to prevent a much larger conflict from breaking out.

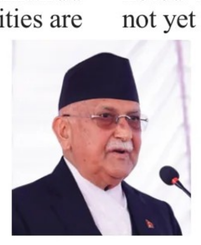
Nepal court extends former leader's prison time

A Nepal court extended former PM KP Sharma Oli's custody by two days to finish questioning him regarding his role in the 2025 Gen-Z protest violence.

KATHMANDU

A court in Nepal has decided to keep former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli in custody for two more days. This extension allows investigators more time to look into his alleged role regarding the Gen-Z protests that shook the nation in 2025.

The order came from Judge Purushottam Khatiwada Kshetri at the Kathmandu District Court. Authorities are specifically questioning Oli about the violence that occurred during major demonstrations last September. Because Oli was arrested last Saturday and is currently dealing with several health issues, the legal process looks a bit different than usual. Instead of a police station, investigators are recording his statements at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, where he is currently receiving medical care.



The core of the case focuses on the events of September 8 and 9, 2025. Those days saw heavy unrest and tragic casualties, leading to a deep investigation into who was responsible for the crackdowns. Police noted that Oli's testimony is not yet finished, which is why they asked for the extra time. Doctors have advised that he is not healthy enough to be moved, so police and lawyers are working around his medical schedule.

This move follows a report from a special panel led by former judge Gauri Bahadur Karki, which looked into the protest violence. While other officials, like former Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak, are also being held, the focus remains on Oli. Officials say the next legal steps depend entirely on what these final statements reveal.

Russia offers more oil supply to India

MOSCOW

As energy markets struggle with the ongoing conflict in West Asia, Russia is stepping up to help India secure its fuel future. Denis Manturov, confirmed that Russian energy giants are ready to significantly boost their exports of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) to India.

This offer is part of a deepening bond between the two nations following their major summit in late 2025. Beyond just fuel, Russia has already become a massive supporter of Indian farmers. Manturov noted that fertilizer shipments jumped by 40 percent last year, and a new joint project is in the works to produce urea locally. This partnership ensures that India's food supply remains stable even as global prices fluctuate.

The cooperation doesn't stop at the surface. Work is moving forward on new units at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant, showing a long-term commitment to clean energy. During his visit, Manturov sat down with India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to discuss trade, technology, and innovation. They also reviewed the progress of agreements made during last December's summit.

Officials from both sides say that the Russia-India relationship is stronger than ever. By working together on everything from nuclear power to farming, both countries are aiming to keep their economies steady during these uncertain global times. It is a partnership built on mutual need and long-term trust.

President Trump announced 100 percent tariffs on imported patented medicines and updated metal duties to boost domestic manufacturing

Trump hits imported drugs with massive tariffs

WASHINGTON, DC

President Donald Trump has unveiled a bold new trade strategy, placing a 100 percent tariff on specific imported patented medicines while updating duties on metal products. This major policy shift aims to encourage companies to manufacture essential drugs within the United States rather than relying on foreign suppliers.

Under these new rules, patented drugs from countries that haven't signed pricing or production agreements with the U.S. will face the full 100 percent tax. For now, generic medicines—which make up a huge portion of exports from nations like India—are safe from these charges, though officials hinted this could change. Large companies must comply by July 31, while smaller firms have until September 29. However, businesses that commit to building American factories can see these tariffs drop significantly, even down to zero in some cases.

The President also simplified how the government taxes items containing steel, aluminum, or copper. If a product is made of less than 15 percent metal, it won't face extra sectoral duties. However, if it contains more than 15 percent metal, a flat 25 percent tariff will be applied to its total value. While some allies like the European Union and South Korea will enjoy lower rates, the overall goal remains clear, that is boosting the domestic industry.

This announcement falls on the first anniversary of Trump's "Liberation Day" trade plan. While critics worry about rising costs for consumers, the administration insists these moves will secure the nation's supply chains and bring trillions in manufacturing investments back to American soil.

World leaders demand reopening of vital seaway

LONDON

A powerful group of forty nations, led by the United Kingdom, has joined forces to demand an end to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. During a high-level virtual meeting, UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper slammed the closure of the route, calling it a reckless move that threatens the entire global economy and oil supply.

The strait is one of the world's most important paths for oil tankers. However, shipping has ground to a halt as tensions between the United States, Israel, and Iran continue to boil over. With frequent attacks on commercial vessels, the risks for sailors have become too high. Major players like France, Germany, Japan, and the UAE signed a joint statement insisting that international waters must remain open and safe for trade.

Interestingly, the United States was missing from the meeting. President Donald Trump has stated that keeping the waterway open is not the responsibility of the American government, a stance that has caused some friction with traditional allies. While the rhetoric is strong, many leaders are hesitant to start a new war. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron have both pushed for peaceful talks instead of military strikes. Macron specifically suggested that sitting down for direct negotiations with Iran is the smartest way to fix the crisis.

The stakes are incredibly high, as the blockade is already making gas prices soar and slowing down global trade. For now, the world watches and waits to see if diplomacy can clear the path.

Bangladesh cuts hours amid growing energy crisis

DHAKA

Bangladesh is officially tightening its belt as a major energy crisis takes hold. Faced with fuel shortages caused by ongoing conflicts in West Asia, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's cabinet has announced strict new daily schedules to save power and reduce spending. The move aims to protect the nation's economy before the situation worsens.

Starting immediately, the workday is getting shorter. Both government and private offices must now operate from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Banks will stop handling transactions at 3:00 pm to ensure they are closed an hour later. Perhaps the biggest change for locals is the new 6:00 pm curfew for shopping malls and retail stores. Only essential services, such as pharmacies and food outlets, are allowed to stay open late.

The government is also targeting "unnecessary" luxury. Decorative lighting at weddings is now banned, and the budget for official seminars and travel has been slashed by half. To look toward a greener future, the state is making it cheaper to bring in electric vehicles, offering tax breaks for schools and companies importing electric buses.

With the regional shortage hitting hard, Bangladesh has turned to India for fuel support. While India is reviewing the request, it must also balance its own energy needs and similar pleas for help from Sri Lanka and the Maldives. For now, the streets of Dhaka will be a little darker and the workdays a little shorter as the country waits for the global energy market to stabilize. These tough steps are seen as vital for survival.

Global groups condemn protests outside Canadian temples

OTTAWA

Hindu advocacy groups around the world are speaking out against a plan by the extremist group Sikhs for Justice to protest outside temples in Canada. The rallies are scheduled for April 5 at the Triveni Mandir in Brampton and the Lakshmi Narayan Mandir in Surrey. Leaders worry these demonstrations will lead to violence and harassment against peaceful worshippers.

The Hindu Canadian Foundation has labeled the move as pure xenophobia, noting that targeting people based on their cultural roots is unacceptable. They have asked Canadian police for full-day security, pointing out that these extremist groups have a history of aggressive behavior. Similarly, the Coalition of Hindus of North America reminded authorities of past incidents where devotees faced "medieval-style" assaults and verbal abuse while trying to pray. They argued that while free speech is important, it should not be used as a cover for religious bigotry or to "lay siege" to a community.

There is some relief for the community in Brampton, however. The Peel Regional Police have committed to enforcing a local law that creates a 100-meter safety zone around places of worship. This means protesters cannot get close enough to physically or psychologically intimidate the congregation. Advocacy groups are now calling on the police in Surrey to follow suit and provide the same level of protection for the Lakshmi Narayan Mandir. The goal is to ensure that every Canadian can visit their place of worship without the fear of being bullied or harassed by political extremists.

LUNAR JOURNEY BEGINS

ARTEMIS CREW HEADS TOWARD THE MOON

CAPE CANAVERAL

History was created as the brave crew of NASA's Artemis II mission officially left Earth's orbit, charting a bold course toward the Moon. This milestone represents humanity's first journey into deep space since the Apollo 17 mission decades ago. Everyone at mission control cheered as the Orion spacecraft successfully performed a critical engine burn that pushed the team past the reach of Earth's gravity.

The maneuver, known as a translunar injection, lasted nearly six minutes. It generated 6,000 pounds of thrust, perfectly placing the spacecraft on its lunar path. NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman spoke with pride, noting that America is officially back in the business of sending humans to the Moon—and this time, they are going farther than ever before.

On board are astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen from the Canadian Space Agency. Their first full day in space was busy with routine checks and exercise to stay fit in zero gravity. The mission launched from the Kennedy Space Center on the massive Space Launch System rocket and is expected to last about ten days.

During this journey, the crew will fly around the Moon to test vital systems required for future landings. This mission is a major test run for NASA's broader Artemis program, which aims to establish a long-term human presence on the lunar surface. Once the flyby is complete, the astronauts will head home for a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean, signaling a new era of space exploration.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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9	8	5	1	3	4	2	7	6
6	3	2	7	9	5	4	8	1
1	7	4	8	2	6	3	9	5

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

QUICK READ

India's manufacturing sector growth slips to four-year low in March

India's manufacturing growth slowed to a four-year low in March due to rising costs, uncertainty, and Middle East conflict

NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector growth slowed to a four-year low in March as rising input costs, intense market competition, global uncertainty, and the ongoing war in the Middle East tempered expansion in new orders and output, according to the latest HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI).

The seasonally adjusted PMI fell to 53.9 in March from 56.9 in February, marking the weakest improvement in overall business conditions since June 2022. In PMI terms, a reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a score below 50 signals contraction. Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, noted that disruptions linked to the Middle East conflict are affecting the global economy and weighing on Indian manufacturers.

The slowdown was most pronounced in the two largest PMI sub-components: new orders and output, which expanded at the slowest pace since mid-2022. Firms reported significant cost pressures across a wide range of inputs, including aluminium, chemicals, fuel, jute, leather, fabric, oil, rubber, and steel. While input costs surged to their highest level in over three-and-a-half years, output price inflation remained subdued as companies sought to retain customers and secure new business.

Despite these challenges, the survey revealed some positive trends. Indian manufacturers saw the strongest expansion in external sales since September last year, with notable demand from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Europe, Japan, the Middle East, Turkey, and Vietnam. Employment also rose at the fastest pace in seven months, reflecting cautious optimism about future production.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global using responses from around 400 manufacturers. Analysts said that while growth has moderated, the sector continues to expand, supported by resilient external demand and a generally positive outlook for the year ahead.

India's defence exports hit record ₹38,424 cr in FY 25-26

New delhi

India's defence exports reached an all-time high of ₹38,424 crore in FY 2025-26, marking a 62.66% increase over the previous year, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced at the National Defence Industries Conclave. DPSUs contributed 54.84% of exports, while private industry accounted for 45.16%, reflecting strong public-private collaboration. Singh highlighted that the growth demonstrates global trust in India's indigenous defence capabilities and advanced manufacturing strength. The milestone underscores India's expanding role in the global defence market and the success of the nation's self-reliant defence ecosystem.

₹17,689 Cr FPI outflow from FAR G-Secs

Mumbai

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) withdrew ₹17,689 crore from Fully Accessible Route (FAR) government securities following the Middle East crisis, signaling heightened risk aversion and concerns over inflation from rising crude prices. Data from the Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL) showed FPI holdings fell to ₹3,13,318.66 crore on April 1 from ₹3,31,007.65 crore. The outflows coincided with a 0.33% rise in 10-year benchmark yields, surpassing 7% for the first time in over 20 months. Experts say higher yields reduce bond appeal, prompting overseas investors to reduce exposure in rate-sensitive FAR government securities.

India's forex reserves drop $10.29 bn to $688.06 bn

Mumbai

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by $10.288 billion to $688.058 billion for the week ended March 27, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported on Friday. The previous week had seen a decline of $11.413 billion to $698.346 billion. The fall comes amid geopolitical tensions in West Asia, which have put pressure on the rupee. The RBI has intervened in forex markets through dollar sales and policy measures to stabilize the currency. For the reporting week, foreign currency assets—the largest component of reserves—dropped by $6.622 billion to $551.072 billion. Gold reserves fell by $3.666 billion to $113.521 billion.

Commercial LPG prices hiked by ₹195.50

New Delhi

Commercial LPG cylinder prices were increased by Rs 195.50, following a sharp rise in global oil prices driven by escalating West Asia tensions. The price of a 19-kg commercial cylinder in Delhi now stands at Rs 2,078.50, while Kolkata saw a higher hike of Rs 218. Domestic cooking gas (14.2-kg cylinder) rates remain unchanged at Rs 913 in Delhi, providing relief to households. Commercial LPG, mainly used by industries and hotels, is deregulated and market-driven, accounting for less than 10% of total LPG consumption. The price revision follows a 44% rise in the Saudi Contract Price, from $542 per metric tonne in March to $780 in April, due to supply disruptions. About 20–30% of global LPG supplies are affected by blockades in the Strait of Hormuz.

IndiGo revises fuel charges for domestic and international flights

HYDERABAD

India's largest airline, IndiGo, announced on Wednesday that it will implement revised fuel charges ranging from Rs 275 to Rs 10,000 on domestic and international flights starting April 2, citing the surge in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices. The revision comes after the government partially increased ATF prices by 25% for domestic flights. Since March 14, IndiGo has already levied fuel charges of Rs 425 to Rs 2,300 on tickets amid escalating fuel costs due to the West Asia conflict.

For domestic routes, fuel charges will now vary by distance, ranging from Rs 275 to Rs 950, while international flights will see surcharges between Rs 900 and Rs 10,000, depending on distance. The airline stated that ATF prices for international operations more than doubled in the last month, significantly impacting operating costs.

IndiGo updates fuel surcharges on domestic and international flights due to rising jet fuel costs after partial government price hikes, leading to moderate airfare increases

IndiGo emphasized that while fully passing on the fuel price hike would require larger fare adjustments, the airline has implemented relatively smaller increases to limit the burden on passengers.

The new fuel charges will take effect from 0001 hours, aiming to balance operational sustainability with passenger affordability. With global fuel prices remaining volatile, the airline may continue to recalibrate charges in line with market conditions.

Nayara and Shell hike petrol, diesel prices in Bengaluru and major cities amid rising global crude oil costs

Nayara, Shell hike petrol and diesel rates across India

BENGALURU

Private fuel retailers Nayara Energy and Shell have raised petrol and diesel prices across major Indian cities, including Bengaluru, amid surging global crude oil costs driven by escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Petrol prices at private outlets in Bengaluru have crossed Rs 120 per litre, while diesel has also seen a significant increase, creating a noticeable gap with government-run fuel stations.

Public sector oil companies, including IOC, BPCL, and HPCL, have maintained retail prices, absorbing under-recoveries despite rising bulk and industrial rates. The government has reiterated that fuel pricing is deregulated, allowing oil marketing companies to adjust rates based on market conditions. Previous measures, such as excise duty cuts on petrol and certain levies on diesel, were aimed at easing consumer burden.

The price hike has triggered concerns among citizens. Ramesh, a cab driver, said the increase strains daily earnings, while Shabana, a school teacher, warned it could push up school fees. Students and small traders highlighted potential rises in transport fares and essential commodity costs.

Experts caution that prolonged high fuel prices may widen inflationary pressures, affecting sectors like food, transportation, healthcare, and education. The situation underscores India's dependence on imported crude oil and the challenges of maintaining energy security amid global volatility.

With elections and by-elections underway in parts of Karnataka, the price rise has become a political issue. Analysts expect fuel prices to remain under pressure in the near term, with the gap between private and public retailers likely to persist.

Govt surpasses FY26 indirect tax target

NEW DELHI

The Government of India has slightly exceeded its indirect tax collection targets for fiscal year 2025-26, according to an official statement. The total indirect tax collection, encompassing customs, excise, and GST, was pegged at over Rs 15.52 lakh crore as per Revised Estimates (RE). Customs duty contributed Rs 2.58 lakh crore, excise duty Rs 3.38 lakh crore, and Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Rs 9.58 lakh crore.

Revenues from customs duty came in at 102% of RE, while excise duty collection reached 101% of RE. The CGST collection stood at 100.8% of RE, resulting in an overall GST plus non-GST revenue of 101.2% of the RE. This performance indicates modest but steady growth in indirect tax receipts, reflecting the resilience of consumption-driven revenue streams. However, collections from the Health and National Security Cess, imposed on pan masala manufacturing, fell short of expectations.

Govt imposes import curbs on all gold, silver, and platinum articles

NEW DELHI

The government imposed import restrictions on all articles of gold, silver, and platinum, a move aimed at preventing misuse of free trade agreements (FTAs). The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) stated that these curbs will apply regardless of prior contracts, irrevocable letters of credit, advance payments, shipment status, or any other commitments, and transitional arrangements will no longer be available.

The DGFT notification revised the import policy and conditions for items covered under Chapter 71, which includes natural or cultured pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metals, articles, imitation jewellery, and coins. The restrictions come into effect immediately.

The government had announced curbs on imports of gold, platinum, and silver jewellery. With this latest move, the restrictions now cover all forms of gold, silver, and platinum articles. Industry officials noted that some importers were exploiting the India-ASEAN FTA to evade tariffs and gain unfair advantages. They have requested that the government simplify the licensing process to ensure that genuine traders are not adversely affected.

India has had a free trade agreement in goods with the 10-member ASEAN bloc since 2010. Over the past year, the government has periodically imposed import curbs to control specific imports: certain types of platinum jewellery were restricted until April 2026, and silver jewellery faced similar restrictions until March 2026.

Officials explained that some traders were misusing the FTA to import precious metals as unstudded jewellery from countries like Thailand, taking advantage of duty differentials. The new measures aim to curb such practices while regulating imports of gold, silver, and platinum more effectively.

Oracle lays off around 12,000 employees in India

NEW DELHI

US-based IT firm Oracle is believed to have laid off approximately 12,000 staff in India, with another round of layoffs expected within a month, impacted employees said.

Globally, the company has fired around 30,000 employees. "In India, around 12,000 employees have been laid off. The company is planning another mass layoff within a month," said two people impacted by the retrenchment, including one from the company's human resource department.

The company has approximately 30,000 employees in India, including those affected by the layoffs.

Oracle declined to comment on the development.

Oracle, in an email sent to staff, said the employees were informed about certain organisational changes and "because of these changes, a decision has been taken to streamline the operations, and as a result, unfortunately, the position you currently hold will become redundant".

The company has offered 15 days' salary to each employee who has completed a year of service in India, in addition to one month of unpaid wages till termination date, leave encashment, gratuity based on eligibility and pay for a one-month notice period.

Oracle has also offered a two-month salary as a top-up.

However, the severance package is available for those who voluntarily and amicably resign from the company.

"I contacted my friends and those who are in human resources. They shared that most of the Indians working in the US with the company have been impacted because the local laws there are very strict when it comes to the retrenchment of their citizens," Sridhar said.

Jet Fuel Hits ₹2 Lakh, domestic airfares partially shielded

NEW DELHI

Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices in India surged to a record Rs 2.07 lakh per kilolitre, crossing the Rs two lakh mark for the first time amid escalating tensions in West Asia. The sharp rise is driven by global supply disruptions, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and increased crude prices. ATF accounts for around 40% of an airline's operational costs, making it a key driver of airfares.

Despite the steep hike, domestic airlines are being shielded from the full impact. The Union Petroleum Ministry said public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), in consultation with the Civil Aviation Ministry, implemented a partial and staggered increase of about 25%, or Rs 15 per litre, for domestic carriers.

This measure is aimed at preventing a sharp rise in domestic ticket prices.

International airlines operating from India, however, will pay the full revised ATF rates, consistent with global pricing. State-owned Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum revise ATF prices monthly based on international benchmarks and exchange rates.

Industry experts, including the International Air Transport Association (IATA), have already noted rising fuel costs are contributing to higher airfares, particularly on international routes where airlines are forced to take longer paths due to airspace restrictions.

STOCK-MARKETS-COMEBACK

Stock markets stage stunning comeback

MUMBAI

Indian stock markets staged a strong recovery, with the BSE Sensex rising 185.23 points to close at 73,319.55, and the NSE Nifty settling above 22,700 at 22,782.30, reversing sharp early losses. The rebound was driven by value buying in IT and banking shares and a sharp rupee recovery following Reserve Bank interventions.

The Sensex fell over 1,588 points to hit a day's low of 71,545.81 but rebounded more than 2,000 points, aided by gains in HCL Technologies, TCS, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank. Nifty also recovered from a 496-point fall to finish in positive territory.

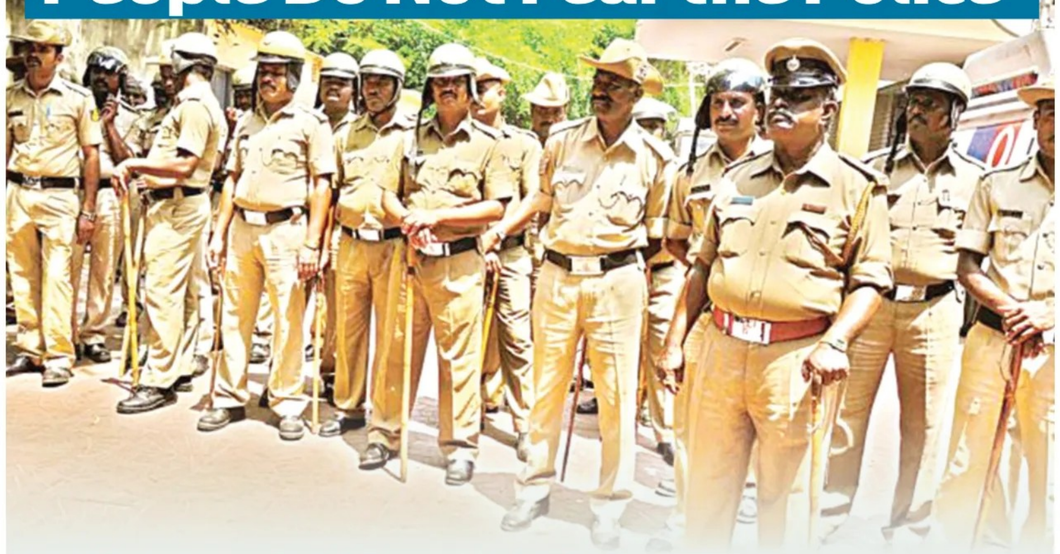
The rupee strengthened by over 150 paise after RBI measures restricted banks' net open positions and barred corporates from non-deliverable forward contracts, improving investor sentiment. Bargain hunting in IT stocks further supported the rally.

Major Sensex gainers included Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Maruti Suzuki, Axis Bank, and ITC, while laggards were Asian Paints, Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, and UltraTech Cement.

Global cues were mixed: crude oil surged over 7% after US President Donald Trump's statement on Iran, Asian markets closed mostly lower, and European indices traded down. FIIs offloaded Rs 8,331.15 crore in equities, partially offset by DIIs buying Rs 7,171.80 crore.

Market experts noted that the recovery underscores resilience in Indian equities amid geopolitical uncertainty, with domestic support and regulatory measures stabilizing investor confidence.

People Do Not Fear the Police



Should the police necessarily instil fear? Should peace and order in society be maintained through fear alone? Should police stations become centres of severe physical and mental torture, or should they serve as spaces that promote awareness and reform the minds of offenders? Such questions are increasingly raised by ordinary people, as well as by writers and intellectuals, in discussions about the police system.

It is both natural and necessary for the public to question the functioning and conduct of the police. At the same time, there is an equally important need for the police to engage in self-reflection.

The police are not expected to behave like saints or religious figures. It is sufficient if they act with integrity and fulfil their duties responsibly. This does not imply that prisoners should be subjected to brutality. In certain situations, punishment may be unavoidable in order to maintain law and order and to prevent crime. However, if confessions can be obtained without resorting to physical violence, such methods must be preferred.

In recent times, public trust and respect for the police appear to have declined. One reason for this is the perceived absence of honesty and efficiency among some officers. The weakening of the police system can be attributed to several factors.

Corruption among sections of the police force is a significant concern. This is partly linked to irregularities in recruitment processes. While not every officer has secured their position through corrupt means, such practices do exist and affect the integrity of the institution. In some cases, there is a noticeable lack of commitment to justice, social welfare, and the well-being of the public.

When a police officer becomes corrupt, they may form alliances with criminals, thereby contributing to the breakdown of law and order. In such circumstances, genuine offenders may not be arrested, or if they are, they may be released without due process. This allows criminal activity to flourish and undermines the safety and stability of society.

Political influence is another major factor contributing to corruption within the police system. It is important to clarify that not all politicians or police officers are corrupt. However, the presence of such practices cannot be ignored.

Interference by political figures in police affairs has become increasingly common, weakening the moral foundation of the institution. Some politicians treat police personnel as personal security, while others use them to shield unlawful activities or target political opponents. This trend reduces the police department to an instrument of those in power, which is deeply concerning.

For the police system to function effectively, it must be granted autonomy. Unwarranted interference from politicians and other influential individuals must be minimised. A weakened police force can lead to a rise in crimes such as murder, robbery, injustice, and sexual violence. In such a society, innocent and vulnerable individuals may struggle to live with dignity. Crimes against women, children, and the elderly are likely to increase under such conditions.

Addressing these challenges requires collective effort. Politicians, police officers, and the public must work together, engage in thoughtful dialogue, and take necessary steps to strengthen the police system. Only through such cooperation can society ensure justice, maintain order, and improve the quality of life for all.

Doctor Faustus: Who Sold His Soul to the Devil in Exchange for Worldly Power

The rise and fall of our lives depend greatly on the relationships we cultivate. The kind of people we associate with and the individuals to whom we show loyalty shape the course of our lives. There is a saying that the company of the virtuous is as sweet as honey. In contrast, the company of the wicked leads us towards destruction.

In the play Doctor Faustus, written by Christopher Marlowe, Faustus falls into evil company and ultimately sells his soul to the devil. The study of this play instils a deep moral awareness in us. It also enables us to understand contemporary social, political, cultural, and religious realities.

Faustus is a university graduate who has conducted extensive research and earned a doctoral degree. He is a seeker of knowledge, a man with an insatiable thirst for learning. He has already acquired vast knowledge across disciplines, including literature, history, philosophy, linguistics, logic, political science, physics, chemistry, and mathematics. Yet his intellectual hunger remains unfulfilled. In his pursuit of further knowledge and deeper understanding, his attention turns to necromancy.

The roots of necromancy lie in the devil, as such knowledge draws humanity into an abyss of violence and cruelty. Faustus begins to read magical texts, longing to possess the mysterious and wondrous knowledge of the occult world. As he prepares to study these books, the Good Angel warns him to avoid such sinful and condemned texts. However, the Evil Angel tempts him, urging him not to abandon these "excellent books" and instead to become the master of the magical world.

By this stage, Faustus is already fascinated by magic and influenced by evil forces. He succumbs to its allure. One must be cautious of temptation, for it is deeply dangerous. Destructive forces often attract us with greater intensity. Faustus becomes captivated by the mysterious powers of the magical world.

When the devil learns of Faustus's fascination, he sends his trusted demon, Mephistopheles, to form a pact with him.

In exchange for experiencing all the pleasures of life, the devil offers Faustus unlimited power. In return, Faustus must write a bond in his own blood. According to this agreement, he will enjoy unrestricted magical powers for twenty-four years. He can obtain anything he desires instantly, whether objects, people, or comforts. In exchange, at the end of this period, he must surrender his soul to the devil.

Faustus signs this dreadful contract with his blood. At that very moment, immense power is granted to him. As the saying goes, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Faustus begins to misuse his power. He torments the innocent and the naive, often using excessive force for trivial matters. He starts to see himself as the master of both the world and nature. He imagines the plunder of India's gold, claims whatever he desires, and even disturbs the peace of souls resting in their graves.

He later learns of the extraordinary beauty of Helen, who lived and died thousands of years ago. To fulfil Faustus's desires, Mephistopheles

remains at his service. When Faustus commands that Helen be brought before him, she appears instantly. At that moment, he utters his famous lines:

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss."

Eventually, the term of the agreement comes to an end. The time arrives for Faustus to surrender his soul. Only then does he realise his grave mistake. He attempts to repent, but it is too late. When he tries to pray, his tongue becomes stiff and refuses to move. The doors of repentance are closed to him.

In the final hour before his damnation, Faustus turns to God in profound despair. He understands the horrors of hell and its torments. He weeps and cries out in agony, yet no divine intervention comes to his aid. In the end, he surrenders his soul and suffers eternal damnation.

A contemporary reading of this play is striking. We can observe many "Faustuses" in today's world. Individuals driven by destructive ideologies often mirror Faustus's tragic path.

Despite being highly educated, Faustus ultimately becomes a victim of his own choices. History shows that even educated individuals, including professors and doctors, have aligned themselves with destructive forces and participated in acts of violence.

Some may even draw parallels between Faustus and modern political figures. Leaders like Donald Trump, who project themselves as dominant global powers can resemble a modern-day Faustus. The desire for control over resources, economic dominance, and the misuse of authority reflects similar patterns of ambition and moral compromise. Those who misuse power and enter dangerous alliances risk facing irreversible consequences.

Thus, the tragedy of Faustus remains a timeless warning about unchecked ambition, the dangers of temptation, the misuse of power, and the moral consequences of human choices.

From Flames to Currents: How Rising LPG Prices Are Rewiring India's Kitchens

Economic Pressure on Middle-Class Households

The pressure on household budgets has intensified sharply in recent months. Domestic LPG cylinder prices for a standard 14.2 kg unit climbed by ₹60 in early March 2026, pushing retail costs to around ₹913 in major cities like Delhi and Mumbai for non-subsidised users.

Even with targeted support for lower-income families, the average middle-class household now faces annual cooking expenses that strain monthly budgets already stretched by inflation in groceries, fuel, and education. Many families report reallocating funds—cutting back on eating out or discretionary spending—to absorb the rise. For a typical four-member urban household, the shift to electric alternatives has meant trading one variable cost for another: higher electricity consumption from appliances like induction stoves and pressure cookers. Yet early calculations suggest operating expenses can drop noticeably when electricity tariffs stay moderate, often below ₹7-8 per unit. This economic trade-off is pushing households to rethink their stoves not as luxuries but as necessities for financial resilience.

In a sunlit apartment in Bengaluru's Koramangala neighbourhood, Priya Rao stirs a pot of dal on her new induction cooktop. The familiar hiss of the LPG flame is gone, replaced by a quiet hum and precise digital controls. Last month, her family's monthly gas cylinder bill jumped after a fresh price hike, forcing a reluctant switch. "We thought it was temporary," she says, "but the electricity bill rose too—yet we're saving overall, and the kitchen feels safer." Priya's story echoes across millions of middle-class homes as India grapples with volatile cooking fuel costs amid global supply strains. What began as an economic pinch is evolving into a profound technological, cultural, and environmental shift in how the country cooks its daily meals.

Technological Shift in Indian Kitchens

This pivot marks a broader technological transformation in Indian kitchens. Induction cooktops, electric pressure cookers, and air fryers have moved from novelty gadgets to everyday staples.

Sales of induction units have exploded, with demand multiplying several times over in online and retail channels within days of supply alerts. Consumers praise the speed—water boils in half the time compared to gas—and the precision temperature control that prevents burning delicate spices.

Electric pressure cookers simplify dal and rice preparation, while air fryers offer healthier versions of fried snacks with minimal oil. For many urban professionals juggling work and family, these devices align with fast-paced lives: no waiting for deliveries, no cylinder swaps, and easy cleanup without soot.

Is this a fleeting response or a lasting change? Evidence points toward permanence for a growing segment.

Efficiency gains are hard to ignore—induction transfers 85-90 percent of energy directly to the pot, versus around 55 percent for open-flame cooking. Once families invest in compatible cookware (magnetic stainless steel or cast iron), the convenience sticks. Younger households, especially in nuclear families or rentals, view electric options as modern and low-maintenance. Manufacturers have responded with dual-burner models and smart features like auto shut-off and timers, making the transition smoother. While some keep a small LPG backup for emergencies, the primary reliance is shifting. Repeated price volatility and delivery uncertainties are accelerating what might have been a gradual evolution into a structural one, particularly in cities with reliable power.

Impact on Rural Communities

Yet the story diverges sharply in rural India, where the LPG crunch hits harder and electric alternatives face steeper barriers. Villages often experience delayed cylinder deliveries even in normal times, exacerbated now by prioritisation for urban and essential services. Many households under subsidy schemes refill far less frequently than intended, sometimes stretching one cylinder for weeks or reverting to traditional biomass when costs spike. Electricity access has improved dramatically—most villages now have connections—but reliability remains patchy. Daily power cuts of two to three hours, or longer during peak summer demand, make induction stoves impractical for families preparing multiple meals. Upfront costs for a decent cooktop, plus compatible utensils, deter low-income rural buyers whose monthly earnings hover around subsistence levels.

In remote areas, device availability is limited; repair services are scarce. As a result, some families report mixing fuels—using whatever LPG arrives for quick tasks and firewood for slow-cooking staples like roti or sabzi. This patchwork coping mechanism highlights a deepening urban-rural divide: cities embrace sleek electric kitchens, while countryside homes cling to familiar flames or smoke-filled chulhas out of necessity

Health and Safety Considerations

Health and safety dimensions add another compelling layer. Traditional LPG stoves pose risks of leaks, accidental fires, and indoor air pollution from incomplete combustion, releasing nitrogen oxides and fine particulates linked to respiratory issues. Women and children, who spend the most time near stoves, bear the brunt. Electric devices eliminate open flames entirely, slashing fire hazards through features like automatic cut-offs if pots overheat or are removed. No combustion means virtually no indoor pollutants—no lingering CO or NOx that can exacerbate asthma, heart conditions, or long-term lung damage. Kitchens stay cooler and cleaner, reducing drudgery from soot buildup on walls and utensils. Families switching report fresher air and fewer coughing episodes, especially in compact urban flats with poor ventilation. While initial adaptation requires learning curves, the long-term health payoff—lower exposure to harmful emissions—makes electric cooking a clear upgrade for safety-conscious households.

Long-Term Energy Security Implications

Looking ahead, the trend harbours profound implications for India's energy security. By reducing reliance on imported LPG—often routed through volatile maritime chokepoints—the nation can insulate households from geopolitical shocks and stabilise budgets. Scaling electric cooking in urban pockets could free up subsidised LPG for rural redistribution, while accelerating renewable integration makes the grid cleaner and more resilient overall. Long-term, this fosters a diversified mix: electric for cities, supplemented biogas or piped gas where feasible, and targeted support elsewhere. It aligns with broader ambitions for self-reliance, cutting import bills that have ballooned in recent years and channelling savings into infrastructure or welfare. Challenges persist—grid upgrades for evening peaks, storage solutions, and ensuring no household is left cooking in the dark—but the momentum is unmistakable. A hybrid future seems likely, where no single fuel dominates but choices empower families

Karnataka wins big at tribal games inaugural

K'taka triumphed as overall champions at the inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games, securing the top spot with 23 gold medals.

RAIPUR

Karnataka has officially been crowned the overall champions of the first-ever Khelo India Tribal Games. The competition concluded in Raipur, with Karnataka holding off a late surge from Odisha to secure the top spot on the final medals tally.

The tournament saw 3,800 athletes from 30 states competing in nine different sports. Karnataka dominated from the very first day, largely thanks to a powerhouse performance in the swimming pool. Out of their 23 total gold medals, 15 came from swimming, supported by additional victories in athletics and wrestling. Manikanta L emerged as the star of the Games, personally bagging an incredible eight gold medals for the Karnataka contingent.

Odisha put up a valiant fight, finishing in second place with 21 gold medals. While they were the only state to win at least one gold in every sport and lead the total medal count with 57, they couldn't quite overtake Karnataka's gold tally. Jharkhand finished third, bolstered by archery star Komalika Bari, who secured individual gold on the final day.

The hosts, Chhattisgarh, ended their campaign in ninth place. Their final contribution was a hard-fought silver medal in men's football after a narrow 1-0 loss to West Bengal. With 20 different states winning at least one gold medal, the event successfully showcased the immense sporting talent hidden within India's tribal communities. The Games highlighted a broad talent pool, proving that tribal athletes are ready to compete at the highest national levels.

UN expert backs new Olympic gender rules

GENEVA

UN expert Reem Alsalem praised the IOC's 2028 policy limiting female sports to biological women, calling it a victory for fairness, safety, and athlete dignity.

A United Nations expert has praised the International Olympic Committee's new decision to limit female sports categories to biological women. Reem Alsalem, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, called the move a major win for fairness and safety in sports.

The new policy, set to begin at the Los Angeles 2028 Games, ensures that eligibility for female events is restricted to biological females. This rule will apply to both individual and team sports. The IOC is also urging other international sports federations to follow these guidelines to keep competitions balanced and secure for women and girls. Alsalem described the policy as being rooted in "common sense, facts, and science." She argued that recognizing the physical reality of sex is a necessary step to protect the dignity of female athletes. According to the expert, this change aligns with international human rights standards by ensuring that women can compete on a level playing field.

While the new rules will not change past results, Alsalem suggested the IOC should look into "remedies for past injustices." This could include formal apologies or even awarding medals to women who previously lost out to transgender competitors. She believe such steps would show a true commitment to female athletes and prove that their rights are being taken seriously. The expert concluded that evidence-based approaches must remain the guide for all future sports policies to ensure that such issues of unfairness do not happen again.

PRESIDENT MURMU AIMS FOR GLOBAL SPORTS DOMINANCE

NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya shared a powerful vision from President Droupadi Murmu, focused on transforming India's tribal youth into world-class athletes. The President believes that with the right support, these communities will lead India to become a "global sports superpower."

In a recent article, President Murmu highlighted how tribal talent has historically boosted Indian sports. She pointed out that tribal players were essential to India's first Olympic hockey gold in 1928 and continue to shine in modern teams. Drawing from her own childhood in a tribal village, she recalled her love for swimming and school sports, noting that these activities build vital team spirit and social bonds.

Minister Mandaviya emphasized that the Khelo India Tribal Games are more than just a competition, they are a bridge to professional excellence. By providing modern facilities to remote areas, the government aims to empower youth who previously lacked opportunity. The President also praised the 'Asmita' scheme, which specifically helps tribal daughters excel in various sporting disciplines.

The President described this talent as "invaluable social capital." She believes that by nurturing this resource, the nation will reach new heights of excellence. Mandaviya echoed this sentiment, stating that consistent encouragement is the key to creating a dominant pool of players. The message from the country's leadership is clear: by investing in tribal roots today, India is securing its golden future on the international sporting stage.

ADITI ASHOK leads Indian challenge in Vegas

LAS VEGAS

India's premier golfer Aditi Ashok finished the opening round of the Aramco Championships as the highest-placed Indian, currently sitting at Tied-58th. Playing in the challenging desert conditions of Las Vegas, Aditi struggled to find her rhythm early on but managed to keep her hopes alive for the weekend.

Aditi finished the day with a score of 2-over 72. While she remains several strokes behind the tournament leaders, her experience on the global stage allowed her to navigate the difficult course layout without letting the round slip away entirely. The star golfer will need a much stronger performance in the second round to climb the leaderboard and secure a comfortable spot for the final stages of the competition.

It was a tough day overall for the Indian contingent in Nevada. Other notable Indian players, including the young talent Avani Prashanth, seasoned pro Diksha Dagar, and Pranavi Urs, found themselves much further down the rankings.

Eleven year old becomes England's chess number one

NEW DELHI

In a stunning achievement for the world of chess, 11-year-old prodigy Bodhana Sivanandan has officially become the top-rated female player in England. The latest rankings from the International Chess Federation (FIDE) confirm that the young star of Indian origin has climbed to the very peak of the national list.

Bodhana, a primary school student living in North London, now holds an impressive FIDE rating of 2366 points. This surge in points allowed her to overtake the current four-time British women's champion, 25-year-old Lan Yao. Reaching the number one spot at such a tender age is nearly unheard of in professional chess, marking Bodhana as one of the most exciting talents to watch globally.

The young champion's roots trace back to Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu, India. Her parents moved to England in 2007, and since then, Bodhana has taken the chess world by storm. Her rise has been nothing short of meteoric, often defeating players more than twice her age with calm precision and advanced strategy.

Experts believe Bodhana's success is a sign of a new generation of players who are mastering the game earlier than ever before. For the London schoolgirl, the ranking is a reward for years of dedicated practice and tournament play across Europe. As she continues to balance her schoolwork with grandmaster-level competition, the chess community eagerly awaits her next move.

Tiger Woods arrested following high profile crash

JUPITER ISLAND

Shocking body camera footage released, shows golf legend Tiger Woods being arrested for driving under the influence after a vehicle crash in Florida. The video reveals a disoriented Woods being handcuffed by deputies after his Land Rover clipped a truck and rolled onto its side.

During the roadside investigation, a Martin County Sheriff's deputy informed the 15-time major champion that his faculties appeared impaired. While a breathalyzer showed no alcohol, officers discovered painkilling pills in his pocket. The arrest affidavit described Woods as "lethargic" and "stumbling," with extremely dilated pupils. Woods reportedly told officers he was distracted by his phone and the radio at the time of the accident. The footage also captured a surprising moment where Woods told police he was speaking with U.S. President Donald Trump immediately after the crash. Woods is currently dating Vanessa Trump, the former wife of Donald Trump Jr. Following the arrest, President Trump confirmed in a Fox News interview that his "close friend" would not be competing in this year's Masters tournament.A Florida judge has since granted the 50-year-old superstar permission to leave the country to enter an intensive, private treatment facility.

FC Goa returns home for massive clash

NEW DELHI

FC Goa is set to return to the familiar grass of Fatorda Stadium for a high-stakes Indian Super League battle against Bengaluru FC. After spending a long month traveling for away games, the "Gaurs" are eager to use their home-field advantage to climb the league table during this critical phase of the season.

The team returns home following three straight draws on the road against East Bengal, Punjab, and Chennaiyin.

Under the guidance of head coach Manolo Marquez, Fatorda has become a true fortress. Remarkably, FC Goa has remained unbeaten at home against Bengaluru throughout Marquez's time in charge.

The coach praised his squad's morale, noting that the players are waking up every day with high spirits and a genuine love for their training sessions.

This match is a classic "six-pointer" for the standings. Bengaluru currently sits in fifth place with 11 points, while Goa is right behind them in sixth with 10 points. A win for the home side would see them leapfrog their rivals.

Local midfielder Harsh Patre, who previously played for Bengaluru, highlighted that recent lineup changes have created more opportunities for Indian players to shine.

He urged his teammates to step up and control the game's tempo.

This fixture marks the start of three consecutive home matches for FC Goa. Fans are expected to turn out in large numbers, hoping the team can turn their recent draws into a much-needed victory at home.

India's top kabaddi stars train for Asia

MUMBAI

The Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) has just wrapped up a groundbreaking five-day national camp designed to supercharge India's elite kabaddi players. This high-performance program, held in partnership with the national federation and Mashal Sports, focused on preparing 75 top male and female athletes for the 2026 Asian Games.

During the camp, athletes moved beyond traditional practice to embrace scientific training methods. The schedule was packed with intense strength and conditioning sessions, technical drills, and professional recovery routines like ice baths and saunas. To ensure the players are ready for the international stage, experts also conducted workshops on vital topics like nutrition, anti-doping, and female health awareness. Each athlete underwent rigorous testing, including the famous Yo-Yo test, to create personalized fitness plans.

IIS Head of Performance Science, Malcolm Geluk, led the coaching team. He explained that since many players are new to structured gym work, the focus was on building the specific power needed to survive the grueling 40-minute matches. Haryana Steelers captain Jaideep Dahiya praised the world-class facility, noting that the combination of education and physical training is rare and invaluable.

Manisha Malhotra, President of IIS, expressed pride in hosting the initiative, calling it a first-of-its-kind learning experience for her team. By blending top-tier infrastructure with modern sports science, the institute is ensuring that India's kabaddi stars have the best possible chance to bring home gold. This camp marks a significant step forward in professionalizing one of India's most beloved traditional sports.

Modi hails SAMSON for world cup heroics

Prime Minister Modi praised 2026 T20 World Cup hero Sanju Samson, whose record-breaking runs led India to a historic third title and back-to-back championship glory.

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared high praise for cricket star Sanju Samson, following his incredible performance in the 2026 T20 World Cup. Speaking to supporters from Kerala, the Prime Minister described Samson as a player who truly shines when the pressure is at its highest.

Samson was the heartbeat of India's journey to the trophy, eventually earning the Player of the Tournament award. He finished the event with a massive 321 runs, maintaining a stunning average of 80.25.

What impressed fans most was his speed, playing with a strike rate near 200. He didn't just score runs; he broke records. Samson officially passed Virat Kohli's mark for the most runs by an Indian in a single T20 World Cup edition.

The batter's path to glory started with a slow burn but ended in a blaze. He saved India with an unbeaten 97 against the West Indies when the team faced a must-win situation.

He then stayed consistent, smashing 89 runs in both the semi-final against England and the final against New Zealand.

Thanks to these efforts, India defeated the Kiwis by 96 runs in the final.

This victory is historic, making India the first team to win back-to-back titles and the first to claim three trophies in total.

Prime Minister Modi noted that Samson's focus and confidence serve as a great lesson for every young athlete in the country.

It was a proud moment for a nation that lives and breathes the sport.

TITANS bring big party to home stadium

The Gujarat Titans are transforming home matches into vibrant festivals, blending world-class cricket with garba, games, and fan celebrations.

AHMEDABAD

The cricket season is officially back, and the Gujarat Titans are doing things differently this year. As they prepare to face the Rajasthan Royals at the Narendra Modi Stadium, the team is turning every home game into a massive, colorful festival for their loyal supporters.

The fun starts the moment you walk through the gates. Two huge fan zones have been set up to keep families entertained long before the first ball is bowled.

You can get your face painted in team colors, create your own cheering banners, or test your skills at interactive batting games. To keep the local spirit alive, there will be live music and traditional garba performances, giving the stadium a true community feel.

If you love taking photos, you are in luck. Nine unique art installations are spread across the venue, offering the perfect backdrop for your social media posts. You can even visit the merchandise stalls to get your name printed on a jersey instantly.

Inside the stadium, the energy will stay high thanks to a live DJ and a massive entertainment stage. During match breaks, special shows will keep the crowd cheering.

To make sure everyone feels like part of the family, the team is giving away free blue T-shirts and flags. The goal is simple: the Titans want to turn the stands into a sea of blue and make sure every fan goes home with a smile, regardless of the final score. It is more than just cricket; it is a celebration.

Jitesh wants to prove RCB victory lasting

BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma is on a mission this season to prove that the team's 2025 IPL title was no fluke. Speaking on the RCB Podcast, Jitesh shared that winning the franchise's first trophy was a magical experience, but he is now focused on building a lasting legacy of dominance.

Jitesh played a massive role in that historic win, specifically recalling his quick-fire 24 runs off just 10 balls in the final. He described the last over of that match as the longest six balls of his life, driven by a desperate hunger to bring the trophy home. Beyond the pitch, Jitesh opened up about the emotional weight of losing his father. He finds comfort in the fact that his father lived to see him wear the India jersey and lift the IPL trophy, an achievement that means everything to him.

The stumper credited teammate Dinesh Karthik, whom he calls "DK anna," for helping him grow mentally and technically. Karthik advised him to take a break and reset with family, which Jitesh says made him feel "reborn" when he returned to the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Now, Jitesh sees himself as more than just a keeper; he is a finisher and a leader ready for any role. While he missed out on the latest India selection, his ultimate goal remains returning to the national side.

As RCB starts the season as defending champions, Jitesh is excited that teams will play harder against them, promising to meet that challenge head-on.

Rahane slams critics following KKR's recent defeat

KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders captain Ajinkya Rahane has hit back at critics questioning his batting speed, claiming detractors hold a personal "agenda" against his success.

The veteran batter's defiant stance comes after KKR suffered a 65-run loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad, leaving the team winless after two matches.

During the chase, Rahane struggled to find his rhythm, scoring only eight runs from nine balls.

His difficulty against spin during the powerplay contributed to a disjointed innings that saw KKR bowled out for 161. Despite this, Rahane was quick to defend his recent record. He reminded reporters that since 2023, his strike rate remains among the highest for Indian players, second only to Abhishek Sharma.

"People talking probably aren't watching the game or are just jealous," Rahane stated during the post-match press conference. He suggested that his critics are shocked by his evolved, aggressive playing style.

The captain emphasized that while he lacked "flow" in this specific match, his intent to play fearless cricket alongside partner Finn Allen remains unchanged.

GAIKWAD URGES PATIENCE FOR CHENNAI'S YOUNG STARS

CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings captain Ruturaj Gaikwad has called for calm and patience as his evolving squad prepares to face Punjab Kings. Following a transition period for the franchise, Gaikwad is prioritizing the mental well-being of his young players over immediate scoreboard results.

The current CSK lineup looks drastically different this season. With legendary figure MS Dhoni sidelined by injury and other veterans retired, the team has leaned heavily on fresh talent. Their opening match in Guwahati saw five players make their debuts, including Sarfaraz Khan and young wicketkeeper Kartik Sharma. While the rookies struggled in the tough conditions, Gaikwad remains firmly in their corner.

"You have to allow them to make mistakes," Gaikwad told reporters.

He emphasized that the high-pressure environment of the IPL is a massive jump for any newcomer.

The skipper believes that for players like Ayush Mhatre and Dewald Brevis to succeed, they must first feel free to express themselves without the fear of instant criticism. He insists that keeping the youngsters in a "good headspace" is the key to their long-term development.

This supportive leadership style mirrors the classic CSK philosophy of building player confidence through stability. While the team integrates seasoned stars like Sanju Samson, the focus remains on nurturing the next generation. Gaikwad stressed that these early games are just the beginning of their professional journeys. As the tournament intensifies, the captain's message is clear: growth takes time, and mistakes are simply part of the learning process.

Delhi Capitals launch new cup to find stars

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Capitals are officially hunting for the next generation of cricket legends. The franchise has announced the launch of the DC Global Academy Cup, a special T20 tournament designed to give young players from their worldwide network a taste of professional competition. This week-long event will run until April 9, bringing together some of the brightest young talents in the sport. The matches are being held at two main venues: the DC Ball Park Ground in Palam Vihar and the AB Rising Cricket Academy in Chhawla. Seven different academies, including some international participants like DC London, are competing in the U13 and U15 age categories. Each team is guaranteed to play at least four or five matches, ensuring every child gets plenty of time on the field to show what they can do. Sunil Gupta, the CEO of Delhi Capitals, explained that the goal is to provide a structured environment where kids can learn the real demands of the game. It is not just about playing; it is about exposing them to the professional ecosystem that surrounds cricket today. The franchise plans to keep a close eye on standout performers, tracking their progress for long-term development. This move follows the success of the 2025 DC School Cup, proving the team is serious about building a direct path from neighborhood parks to the big leagues. By investing in these kids now, the Capitals are securing a very bright future for the sport.

Delhi Capitals set for thrilling home opener

The Delhi Capitals are ready for their first home game of the season against the Mumbai Indians at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. The Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) has worked hard to ensure fans enjoy a fresh and improved experience. DDCA Secretary Ashok Sharma said upgrades began during the recent T20 World Cup. The stadium now features new branding, decorations, cleaner washrooms, and enhanced media boxes. Recent rainfall has made the outfield lush, and the wicket has been carefully prepared for top-quality play.

PRADHAN AND YADAV visit famous holy shrine

UJJAIN

The spiritual atmosphere at Ujjain's famous Mahakaleshwar Temple reached a new high, as two prominent figures joined the sacred Bhasma Aarti. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Indian fast bowler Umesh Yadav stood among the devotees to offer their prayers at the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, which remains one of the most respected Shiva shrines in the country.

For Minister Pradhan, the visit was a deeply moving experience. Speaking to reporters afterward, he shared how spiritually fulfilling it felt to attend the ceremony on the very first day of Vaisakh. He noted that every visit to Lord Mahakal brings him a unique sense of peace and satisfaction. It was a moment of reflection for the leader amidst his busy schedule.

Cricketer Umesh Yadav was equally thrilled to be part of the morning ritual. He expressed his joy simply, saying he enjoyed the experience immensely and hoped for the continued blessings of Lord Mahakal. Yadav has been a powerhouse for Indian cricket since his debut back in 2010. Over his career, he has played 141 international matches and taken 288 wickets, including three impressive five-wicket hauls. Though he last wore the India jersey in 2023 during the tough Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia, he remains a fan favorite.

KLAASEN says Sunrisers learned from past mistakes

KOLKATA

After a massive 65-run victory against the Kolkata Knight Riders, Sunrisers Hyderabad star Heinrich Klaasen shared how a change in mindset is fueling the team's success this season. Following the match at Eden Gardens, the explosive South African batter explained that the squad has finally learned from previous years, where players often lost their wickets by trying to hit big shots too early.

Klaasen showed off this new, smarter approach during his steady knock of 52 runs from 35 balls. Instead of swinging at every delivery from the start, he focused on rotating the strike and settling in. He credited openers Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head for providing such high-speed starts that the middle order no longer feels desperate to force the run rate. This freedom allowed Klaasen to build a crucial 82-run partnership with young talent Nitish Kumar Reddy, who contributed a quick 39 runs. Together, they pushed the Sunrisers to a daunting total of 226.

The target was far too much for the defending champions, KKR, who were bowled out for just 161 runs in 16 overs. Nitish Kumar Reddy proved to be the hero of the day, following up his batting with two key wickets. He was well-supported by bowlers Jaydev Unadkat and Eshan Malinga, who also took two wickets each. By balancing aggression with smart game management, the Sunrisers are proving they are a much more dangerous and mature team in 2026. They aren't just playing hard, they are playing smart.

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